A

VINDICATION

OF THE

GOVERNMENT OF *NEW-ENGLAND*

CHURCHES.

Drawn from Antiquity; the Light of Nature; Holy Scripture; it's Noble Nature; and from the Dignity Divine Providence has put upon it.

BY

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There are none to guide her among all the Sons whom ſhe hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the Sons that ſhe hath brought up.

ISA. li. 18.

Say ye unto your Brethren Ammi, *and to your Siſters* Ruhamah.

HOS. ii. 1.

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MDCCLXXII.

The constitution of New-England CHURCHES, as settled by their Platform, may be fairly justified, from *Antiquity*; the *Light of Nature*; *Holy Scripture*; and from the *Noble* and *Excellent Nature* of the *Constitution* itself. And lastly from the *Providence of GOD* dignifying of it.

1. The first demonstration contains the voice of *Antiquity* in the following *Chapters*.

CHAP. I.

To distribute the whole Christian Æra *into three Parts may serve to raise a clearer light, and make a brighter aspect in this* Essay.

1. THE first division contains the first three hundred years of christianity, which may be accounted the most refined and purest time, both as to faith and manners, that the christian church has been honored with; for that within this space, is contained the ministry of the apostles and holy evangelists, and other eminent persons authorized by them; and such others who succeeded in office-trust through the several ages, within the space before named. This was the time of an immense effusion of the Spirit of God upon the world, when there was such a flux and inundation of the waters from the sanctuary, mentioned, *Ezek.* 47. This was the age of miracles; a time of extraordinary gifts, and when grace and true piety was in the greatest elevation. Christian religion was now a dangerous busines; every man that took it up, lay

down his life, honor and fortune at ſtake; he that owns Chriſt, muſt bid defiance to all the celebrated deities of the Roman empire; and thereby run counter to the religion of the imperial court. So that rationally we may expect to find the churches of Chriſt in the pureſt capacity they were ever in; in all points, both of principles and practice. That whatever their government was if they continue the ſame from the days of the apoſtles, we may fairly conclude it to be authentic, and agreable with their grand and original copy. It is moſt apparent, that the churches in thoſe ages, were under too good an influence internally, and the eye of too direful a guard, externally to prevaricate with God, in the known principles of their order, any more than in their faith, though they were not without errors. Two or three hundred years, is a long time in the world, to keep up our conſtant mode and cuſtom, either in religious or civil affairs amongſt men, who are ſo inclined to err, and apt to change their faſhions; *Nam eſt Natura hominum Novitatis Avida.* That for the churches through thoſe many ages and in their ſeveral communities, to agree in their diſcipline amongſt themſelves; and not eſſentially to differ from thoſe churches that were truely apoſtolical, invincibly infers, that their original was divine. But this will appear more plainly when we have made and finiſhed our ſurvey.

2. The ſecond grand diviſion of time, contains the ſpace of the next twelve hundred years, downward, more or leſs; within which circuit is included the commencement & progreſs of a direful apoſtacy, both as to worſhip, and government in the churches. Some ſymptoms of theſe things were riſing within the former diviſion of time; but in this they grew a great pace, and to that degree, that the chriſtian world became a moſt notorious apoſtate. For as we have it in the idea of the reformation, the great Lord of time allowed a ſpace, wearing the denomination of time, times, and half a time: or in plainer expreſſions, twelve hundred and ſixty years; in which ſpace, all the effects of a horrible apoſtacy made a very *Gehennon* of that which was called Chriſtendom. And ſays Dr. *Owen*, (in his preface, to the inquiry, into the original of the churches) *Ambros* judged, that it was the pride, or ambition of the doctors of the church, which introduced the alteration in its order. And

moreover says the doctor, somewhat after this manner, viz. 'The ambition of church rulers, in the fourth and fifth centuries openly proclaimed itself to the scandal of the christian religion; for that their interest led them to a deviation from the order and discipline of the church according to its first institution': For that the directions given about it in scripture, make it a matter so weighty in itself, and attended with so many difficulties, it being laid under such severe interdictions of lordly power, or seeking either of wealth or dignity; that it's no pleasant thing to flesh and blood, to engage in the conduct, and oversight of Christ's volunteers; to bear with their manners; to exercise patience towards them in all their infirmities; and in all their weaknesses, to continue a high valuation for them, as the flock of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood: All this requires abundance of self-denial; and if so, then it's no wonder, that many of their prelates were willing gradually to extricate themselves out of this uneasy condition; and embrace all opportunities of introducing another order into the churches, that might tend more to the exaltation of their own power and dignity. And this was done accordingly; for the bishops by their arbitrary rules shared the flock of Christ amongst themselves, and that without the consent of the people, as though they had conquered them by the sword. For thus they divide the spoil. This bishop say they, shall have such a share and number of them under his power; and that other bishop shall have so many; and so far shall the jurisdiction of one extend, and so far another; that they soon canton out the whole Roman empire under a few patriarchs and head men. These things were the subject of their decrees and laws, which (those of Christ's being thrown by) were now become a rule for the churches. But yet neither did the bishops long keep within those bounds and limits, which their more modest ambition had at first prescribed unto them; but went on, and took occasion from these beginnings to contend amongst themselves about pre-eminency, dignity, and power: In which contest, the bishop of *Rome*, at length remained master of the field; and so *Rome* obtained the second conquest of the world. And then his holiness the head of it came to ride admiral of all the Sees; and then soon became lord of heaven and earth by the

ſame rule of proceſs which brought him to his high truſt. Hence, Query. What can't wakeful ambition, learning and fraud do, if jointly agreed, at rifling the greateſt treaſures bequeathed to mankind; eſpecially when the world is generally gotten into a ſleepy fit.

3. Towards the latter end of this ſpace of time began a glorious reformation. Many famous perſons, memorable in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, being moved by the ſpirit of God, and according to holy writ, led the way in the face of all danger; ſuch has *Wickliff*, who openly decryed the pope, as the very antichriſt; in the fourteenth century, and others in that age. And in the next century *Martin Luther* purſued the reformation with great boldneſs, reſolution and conſtancy; this is that famous *Luther*, ſays my author, of whom they who acknowledge the leaſt, muſt yet make as much as Dr. *More* makes of him; for ſaith the Dr. 'I cannot think ſo very highly of *Luther* as ſome 'do; and yet I think him to have been a very happy 'inſtrument in the hand of God, for the good of Chriſ-'tendom againſt the horrid enormities of the papal 'hyrarchy.' And though he might not be allowed to be 'the *Elias*, the conductor and chariot of *Iſrael*, as ſome 'have ſtiled him; yet I think at leaſt he might be ac-'counted a faithful poſtilion in that chariot, who was well 'accoutred with his wax boots, oiled coat, and hood; 'and who turned the horſes noſes into a direct way from '*Babylon* toward the city of God, and held on in a good 'round trot, through thick and thin, not caring to beſpat-'ter others in this high fogg, as he himſelf was finely 'beſpattered by others:' About which time *Zuinglius*, *Oecolampadius*, *Melanchon* and other chriſtian heroes alſo liſted into the ſame quarrel, and with great bravery and ſelf denial went forward with the reformation. Yet after the endeavours of ſuch men, and others without number, through ſeveral ages downward; the churches, which are called reformed, attained to a very imperfect reformation, as Dr. *Increaſe Mather* ſays. And the defect has not been ſo much in doctrine, as in worſhip and diſcipline. And notwithſtanding ſays the Dr. in this reſpect alſo, ſome churches have gone beyond others. Now to come to what I aim at; theſe churches in *New-England*, as to their order and diſcipline have ſurpaſſed all churches of the

reformation. And under the head of discipline, it seems to me, that Christ the captain of salvation, has given out his word to these churches, as to his troops coming up in the rear of time; and his word of command is----as you were; make good the old front; or place your selves in that regimental order, which the primitive churches were in whilst they march't under my banners, and encountred the devil in their heathen persecutors for the first three hundred years. For that the churches in *New-England*, and the primitive churches are eminently parallel in their government. Those first ages of the church it is certain were many times much annoyed with many pestilent and damnable heresies; and many usages in worship, too superstitious crept in amongst them; yet they continued in the constitution of their church order very uniform and apostolical; and it is very obvious that these churches in this wilderness, in the essentials of government; are every way parallel to them.

I shall represent this business by a collection of parellel notes out of several authors of unquestionable veracity; and shall principally follow the guidance of one who has concealed his name; and stiles his treatise, 'An inquiry into the constitution, discipline, unity and worship of the primitive churches.' This author in his preface gives this fair account of his doings; says he, *What I have written I have wholly collected out of the genuine, and unquestionably authentick writings of those ages*; meaning such as writ in, or of the three first centuries of christianity. And says he, *I have been every way honest and unbiast.* And being well assured of his fidelity; I shall endeavour to imitate his faithfulness, in transcribing what I find in him suiting my present purpose. And I shall be well and sufficiently furnished when I have laid before the reader the notion which the ancients had of the church in its constituent parts both of officers and people, with the several authorities, powers, rights, immunities and prerogatives belonging unto each. And if we find that the primitive churches in their order and discipline, did exactly agree in the essentials of government; with the churches in *New-England*; we may rationally then conclude that if they were apostolical, so are we.

CHAP. II.

Of the Church.

TO pass over all other observations, the most usual and common acceptation of the word *Church*, of which we must chiefly treat, is that of a particular church; which consists of a society of christians, meeting together in one place, under their proper pastors, for the performance of religious worship, and the exercising of christian discipline. This description of a church is agreable with the *Idiom* both of scripture and antiquity. Thus *Tertullian*, who lived about the end of the second century, gives us an account of the state, order and worship of the churches. (*Apol. ad Gen. Cap.* 39.) The description of a church he first lays down in these words, *viz. Corpus sumus de Conscientia Religionis, et Disciplinæ Unitate, et Spei Fœdere.* We are a body united in the conscience of religion, or for the conscientious observation of the duties of religion; by an agreement in discipline, and in a covenant of hope. For whereas such a body, or religious society could not be united but by a covenant; he calls it a covenant of hope, because the principal respect therein was had unto the things hoped for. This religious body, or society thus united by covenant, did meet together in the same assembly, or congregation. For says he, *Corpus sumus, Coimus in Cœtum, et Congregationem ut ad Deum, &c.* We are a body, and meet in an assembly, and congregation, to offer up our prayers unto God, and attend the duties of the christian religion. So *Iræneus* also in the second century, tells us, *That some of the brethren, and sometimes the whole church of some certain place,--- by fasting and prayer have raised the dead.* Thus our own platform agrees in sense with the opinion of the ancients. *Plat. Ch.* 2. *Sect.* 6. *A congregational church, is by the institution of Christ, a part of the militant church, consisting of a company of saints by calling, united into one body by an holy covenant, &c.* But as to the independency, or real distinction between church and church; this will more clearly appear in what follows. Therefore I shall proceed to consider the constituent parts of a church, as divided,

1. Into the people who compoſed the body of the church, called the elect, or the called and ſanctified by the will of God; and ſometimes they are called the brethren, becauſe of their brotherly love, &c.

2. Into thoſe perſons who were ſet apart for office, or for a peculiar and eccleſiaſtical improvement. And each party under this diſtribution, had their particular immunities and employments. And under theſe heads, I ſhall confine the diſcourſe to a parallel in the eſſentials in government or church order, between the churches of Chriſt in the firſt ages of chriſtianity, and the churches of *New-England*, as ſettled by their platform.

CHAP. III.

I SHALL proceed to diſtribute and enumerate the operations and immunities of the churches.

1. With relation to the peculiar acts of the officers.

2. The peculiar acts of the laity, or fraternity.

3. The joint acts of them both; as performing the work and buſineſs of an organic church, or compleat corporation. And,

4. I ſhall laſtly make ſome obſervations upon the union of diſtinct churches, by acts of ſiſterly fellowſhip or communion. And hereby I ſhall compleat the parallel, in the eſſentials of order, between the primitive churches, and thoſe of this country.

1. The peculiar acts of the officers or clergy. Under this head might be conſidered the functions of every particular order, and degree of the clergy; which we may ſay were according to the pureſt antiquity, but three, viz. biſhops, prieſts or preſbyters, and deacons. I ſhall principally conſider the biſhop as the chief officer in truſt and dignity, in the primitive church. And in order to it,

1. In general obſerve, that though there were ſome diſtinctions in point of a tetular dignity and degree between a biſhop and preſbyter; yet they were really equal in order, and in the nature of their truſt. For that in an eccleſiaſtical ſenſe, biſhop and preſbyters are ſynonimous terms, ſetting forth the ſame office; and ſignify no more but an elder, a paſtor, ruler, or overſeer of a church.

Ignatius calls the apoſtles themſelves the preſbyters of the church; and *Theodoret* renders the reaſon of the appellation, for ſaith he, 'The holy ſcriptures called the chief 'men of *Iſrael*, the ſenate or elderſhip.' *Wilſ. Dict.* And indeed according to the apoſtle himſelf, preſbyters, or elders, and biſhops, are plainly terms of office; and of equal ſignification. As in *Tit.* i. 5, 7. *For this cauſe left I thee in* Crete, *that thou ſhouldeſt---ordain elders---For a biſhop muſt be blameleſs, as the ſteward of God*, &c.

In this diſcourſe I ſhall repreſent the biſhop in the ſenſe of the primitive churches, as head and chief officer of the church; for according to *Cyprian*, there was but one biſhop, ſtrickly ſo called, in a church at a time, though at the ſame time there were many elders or preſbyters in the ſame church; and the biſhop in a peculiar manner was related to his flock, as a paſtor to his ſheep and a parent to his children. *Cyp. Epiſt.* 38. § 1. *p.* 90. And the titles of this ſupreme church officer, are moſt of them reckoned up in one place, in *Cyp. Epiſt.* 96. *viz.* Biſhop, paſtor, preſident, governor, ſuperintendant or prieſt. And this officer is he, which in the *Revelation*, is called, *The angel of the church*, as *Origen* thinks.

2. We may conſider more diſtinctly, the object of his care, or the dimenſions of the boſhops dioceſs. Its very obvious, that this great and ſuperior officer, as has been ſaid; had but one church under his paſtoral care. The dioceſſes government or dominion of theſe reverend prelates, are never (according to antiquity) ſaid to contain churches, in the plural, but only a church, in the ſingular number. And the biſhop was uſually called the biſhop of this or that church. As *Tertullian* ſaith, *Polycarp* was ordained biſhop of the church of *Smyrna*, &c. And moreever it is accurately to be obſerved, that the moſt frequent word uſed to denominate the extent of the biſhops care, or to ſet out the limits of his dioceſs, was that of a pariſh. So in the ſynodical epiſtle of *Irenæus* to *Victor*. The biſhopricks of *Aſia* are called pariſhes: and in the hiſtory of *Euſebius*, the word is ſo applied in ſeveral hundred places. It's very uſual there to read of biſhops of this and that pariſh. As the biſhop of the pariſh in *Alexandria*, the biſhop of the pariſh in *Epheſus*, and in *Corinth*, &c. For that the word *Parœikia*, which we render *pariſh*,

ſignifies *houſing*, or *living* together. And in ordinary and civil uſe, it notes a village, ſmall town, or part of a town, of people or perſons dwelling together. And in a church ſenſe it ſignifies a competent number of chriſtians dwelling near together, and having one biſhop, paſtor or miniſter, or more ſet over them; with whom they meet at one time or place, to worſhip and ſerve God. So that pariſh in this ſenſe, is the ſame with a particular church or congregation. And this is plainly agreable with the ſenſe, cuſtom and platform of *New-England* churches.

3. That the biſhops dioceſs exceeded not the bounds of a pariſh, or a ſmall town, or part of a town, is very evident from the following demonſtrations, according to antiquity.

Demonſt. 1. For that all the people of a dioceſs did every Sunday, meet together in one place, to celebrate divine ſervice. Thus ſaith *Juſtin Martyr*, (*Apol.* 2. *p.* 98.) All aſſemble together in one place, where the biſhop preaches, and prays.

Demonſt. 2. The biſhop had but one alter, or communion-table in his dioceſs, at which his whole flock received the ſacrament from him. There is but one alter ſays *Ignatius* (*Epiſt. ad Phila. p.* 41.) as there is but one biſhop. So ſays *Cyprian*, we celebrate the ſacrament; the whole brotherhood being preſent. And thus it was in *Juſtin Martyr's* days. The biſhops whole dioceſs met together on Sunday, when the biſhop gave them the euchariſt.

Demonſt. 3. All the people of a dioceſs were preſent at church cenſures; as *Origen* deſcribes an offender, as appearing before the whole church. In *Mat. Tom.* 17. *Page* 133. *vol.* 1. So *Clemens Romanus* calls the cenſures of the church, the things commanded by the multitude.

Demonſt. 4. No offenders were reſtored again to the churches peace, without the knowledge and conſent of the whole dioceſs; they were to plead their cauſe before the whole people, *&c.*

Demonſt. 5. When the biſhop of a church was dead, all the people of that church met together in one place to chuſe a new biſhop. So *Sabinus* was choſen biſhop of *Emetria*, by the ſuffrage of all the brotherhood. The

whole dioceſs of the biſhops did meet together to manage church affairs. Thus when the ſchiſm of *Feliciſſimus*, in the biſhoprick of *Carthage* was to be debated, it was to be done according to the will of the people, and by the conſent of the laity. And when there were ſome hot diſputes about the reſtitution of the lapſed, *Cyprian* promiſed his whole dioceſs, that all thoſe things ſhould be examined before them, and judged by them. So that from the premiſes, it is very evident, that that dioceſs cannot poſſibly be more than one ſingle congregation; nor that church more than a congregational church, where all the people and members of that church meet together at one time, and in one place to pray together, to receive the ſacrament together; aſſiſt at church-cenſures together, and diſpatch church affairs together. And it is very apparent, that this was the method and way of the primitive churches, according to the preceeding obſervations. And *New-England* churches harmonize exactly in their common practice, as tho' they had taken their directions from them.

4. The biſhops duty, or the ſeveral particular operations of his honourable office, were ſuch as theſe, *viz.* preaching of the word, praying with his people, adminiſtring the ſacraments, taking care of the poor, ordaining of miniſters, governing his flock, excommunicating of offenders, and abſolving of penitents. In a word, whatever can be comprized under thoſe three general heads of preaching, worſhip and government, were parts of the biſhops function and office. And this alſo is very agreable with our platform: *Cap.* 10. *Sect.* 8. The power which Chriſt hath committed to the elders, is to feed and rule the church of God, &c.

CHAP. IV.

The Prerogatives, or Peculiar Immunities of the Laity.

THE fraternity or body of the people had ſeveral high immunities inherent in them; and exerciſed by them as a church. As,

1. Voting and giving their ſuffrage, for the admiſſion and cenſure of members. To this purpoſe before.

2. The electing their own officers. For when a parish, or bishoprick was vacant through the death of the incumbent, the members of that parish met in church to choose a fit person for his successor; to whom they might commit the care and government of the church. When *Alexander* was chosen bishop of *Jerusalem*, it was by cumpulsion or choice of the members of that church. And so in the church of *Rome* when their bishop was deceased; all the people met in the church to choose a successor. *Euseb. Lib.* 6. *cap.* 28. Though it is certain that after some time the aspiring clergy rob'd the people of this as well as of other of their rights. As it is well represented by a late worthy anonymous author, writing *de Ordinatione*, p. 30. *Crescente Paulatim Cleri Potestate ad se magis indies*, &c. The power of the clergy gradually increasing, they daily drew more new rights to themselves, which they took from the people; thinking that the dignity which they had obtained, was not ample enough, if the people had any share with them in elections. Therefore at length snatch or take the whole business into their own hands; the people through their supine negligence not much opposing of them. Yet that the people might be husht into quiet (with much grace) they grant them the favor of beggars, viz. *Postulare*; to ask for an officer. But this plundering of the churches falls within the second grand division of time. Not within the first three hundred years.

3. Of approbating of ordination. All the people were consulted; and none were admitted into holy orders without their approbation. As we are assured by *Cyprian (Epist.* 33.) who tells us it was his constant custom, in all ordinations to consult his people, and with their common counsel to weigh the merit of every candidate of the sacred orders.

4. Of deposing of their own officers the way. *Pag.* 96. *Sect.* 2. For if their bishops proved scandalous and wicked in life; heretical and apostates from the faith, the churches had power to degrade and depose them, and choose others in their room. There is a peculiar example of this kind in a letter from the church of *Rome* to the church of *Corinth*, written by *Clemens Romanus, Euseb. Lib.* 3. *Cap.* 14. upon which Dr. *Owen* makes this observation, *viz.* That

the church of *Corinth* was fallen into a sinful excess in the deposition of their elders, whom the church of *Rome* judged to have presided amongst them laudably. But yet in the whole epistle the church of *Corinth* is no where reproved, for assuming an authority to themselves which did not belong to them. It seems what *Cyprian* afterwards affirmed, was then acknowledged, namely, that the right of choosing the worthy, and rejecting the unworthy was in the body of the people. But the *Corinthian* church is severely reproved for the abuse of their liberty and power, *State of Churches*, p. 94. Also when two *Spanish* bishops were deposed by their churches, that the said churches might not seem to act by a power which belonged not to them; they sent into *Africa* to several bishops to know their judgment thereupon, who being convened in a synod (*Anno. Dom.* 258.) whereof *Cyprian* was president; they commended, and approved their proceedings; assuring them it was according to the divine law, which was express, that none but those that were holy and blameless, should approach God's altar; that if they had continued to have communicated with their prophane bishops, they would have been accessary to their guilt and villany and would have contradicted those examples, and commands in scripture, which obliged a people to separate from wicked, and ungodly ministers, that they had not acted irregularly in what they had done; since the people had the chief power in choosing worthy bishops, so also of refusing those who were unworthy. And many other passages there are in that epistle which flatly assert the peoples power of deposing scandalous bishops. Yet where the churches were associated to render their action more unquestionable, they had assistance from others; but yet the power is plainly acknowledged to be inherent in the church. *Epist.* 68. *Apud Cyp.* §. 1. 2. 3. *p.* 200. These premises are very harmonious with the constitution of these churches. *Platf. C.* 10. *Sect.* 5. 6. The power which is granted by Christ to the body of the church, and brotherhood is a prerogative.

1. In choosing their own officers.

2. In the admission, and censures of their own members. And,

3. In case an elder offend incorrigibly &c. as they had power to call him to office; so they have power according to order to remove him from his office, &c.

CHAP. V.

3. WE come nextly to consider the joint acts of officers and people, carrying on, as an organic body. And these peculiarly refer to the discipline, and good government of the church. And tho' ministerial trust (precisely considered) was solely devolved on the officers; yet still the fraternity stood interested in, and possessed of a share in the juridical part of government, the whole church in ordinary cases were the judges which composed the ecclesiastical consistory. So that the power of the keys was so lodged both in the bishops and people, as that each had a share to exercise and improve in joint acts of judicature, and thus the clergy and laity conjunctly made up that supreme court which was in every parish, where all church offenders were tried, and when found guilty, were sentenced and condemned. That the laity did exercise judicial power in the church, is further evident from several testimonies. As in that of *Clemens Romanus*. (*Epist.* 1. *Ad Corinth*, p. 69.) where he writes: *Who will say according to the example of* Moses, *If seditions, contentions, and schisms are happened because of me, I will depart, I will go whithersoever you please, and I will do what shall be injoined me by the people, so the church of Christ be in peace.* So *Origen* discribes a criminal appearing before the whole church. In *Mat. Tom.* 13. *Cyprian*, when some had committed some great misdemeanors, professes himself not a sufficient judge, but they ought to be tryed by all the people, *Epist.* 28. *p.* 64. And to the same purpose, he writes of other delinquents; viz. That such matters should be adjusted according to the arbitrament, and common council of the people. And that the lapsed in admitting them to communion, should plead their cause before the clergy, and before all the people. And concerning such matters he writes to the people, that when it should please God to restore peace to the church, and reduce him from exile, then the case of the delinquents should be examined in their presence, and according to their judgment. And *Cyprian* writes in another place, that all things were debated in common amongst them. And that whoever was excommunicated it was by the suffrages of the people. And though the elders were princi-

pally concerned, in preparing cafes for the churches cognizance ; yet its plain that the decifive fuffrage was (in part) the prerogative of the people. To this purpofe we have an inftance in fome that joined in the fchifm of *Novatus* ; who being fenfible of their fault, came into the prefbytery, and defired the churches peace ; the prefbytery accepted their fubmiffion, and propofed it to the whole church, who readily embraced it. Now it is to be obferved, that agreably with the fore-cited practice of the primitive churches, our own platform has decided the queftion concerning the fubject, and exercife of government, *Platf. C.* 10. *Sect.* 11. The ordinary power of government belongs only to the elders ; and power of privilege remaineth with the brother-hood, (as the power of judgment in matters of cenfure, and and power of liberty in matters of liberty) thence it follows, that in an organic church, and right adminiftration, all church acts proceed after the manner of a mixt adminiftration, fo that no church act can be confummated, or perfected without the confent of both.

CHAP. VI.

4. I Shall nextly confider the fellowfhip and communion that diftinct churches had and held one with another.

It is very obvious by this time, (and he muft blind his own eyes that won't fee it) that the primitive churches according to the account we have of their regiment for the firft three hundred years from Chrift) were diftinct, political bodies ; and neither diocæfan, national, provincial nor claffical, but properly congregational churches. And as fuch, were perfect and compleat focieties incorporate ; fo that they had a power, and capacity of carrying on all church work within themfelves, and wanted not to borrow, or receive from others, for the fupport of their being, and fo were independent. Yet confidering they were imperfect in their matter, and therefore to help forward their well-being, wanted the advantage of all good means ; with the influence of the grace, love, knowledge, experience, wifdom, and counfel of each other ; fo they were dependent, and became mutually officious, and accountable each to other : fomewhat after the manner, as Mr. *Hooker* dif-

tinguiſhes on the independency, and dependency of goſpel churches. *Pol. lib.* 2. *Chap.* 3. Says he, *independency implies two things.* Either,

1. An abſolute ſupremacy, oppoſed to ſubordination; and ſo a particular church is not independent, it being accountable to civil government, &c. And alſo to the confociation of churches. Or,

2. Independency ſignifies a ſufficieny in its kind, for the attainment of its end. And in this ſenſe, independency is oppoſed to imperfection: And if we take it thus, then a particular church may be ſaid to be independent, it being ſufficient to attain the end it was inſtituted for; it having compleat power, when rightly conſtituted, to exerciſe all the ordinances of God. And thus we find that the primitive churches in this ſenſe were independent churches: that is, every particular church had a ſufficient right, and power, without the concurrence and authority of any other church, to carry on the worſhip of God, and exerciſe of diſcipline in their diſtinct ſociety. And yet as they were parts of the univerſal church, held themſelves obliged to a ſuitable communion. And for the ſupport of unity, love, and concord amongſt them, and to adviſe about their common circumſtances and condition; and alſo to regulate their eccleſiaſtical affairs within their general limits, for their mutual advantage; did therefore form themſelves into ſynodical aſſemblies, & and were governed in common by them; for their ſynodical decrees, canons or inſtitutions, were accounted abligatory to all the churches, who had their repreſentatives in the ſynods. For indeed to what purpoſe elſe did they draw up their reſolves, but for the good and benefit of the whole community. And it would have been very fruitleſs to have made wearifome journeys, with great coſt and pains to determine ſuch things, as they judged expedient for the churches well-being; if after all, it were indifferent whether they were obeyed or no: or that when the whole was agreed, ſome ſhould reluct, and remonſtrate; and eſpecially when things were fairly ſettled by a joint ſuffrage in ſynods, ſome ſmall ſet of wiſe men ſhould hold themſelves wiſer than whole ſynods; and afterward ſhould of their own heads in their more private apartments ſet forward new ſchemes, which in itſelf is diſorderly, and a way to keep the churches conſtantly fluctuating and wreſ-

leſs like the unſtable ocean. And indeed, conſidering the regularity, wiſdom and union in ſynodical ſettlements, whilſt that all ſorts of perſons intereſted, both officers and people having had their full liberty in debates, and their free votes and ſuffrages, in drawing up the decrees and ſettlements; it is a bold intruſion, and little better than defying and trampling under foot the unity, love, honor and authority of the churches, to run counter with ſynodical ſettlements, till they are fairly repealed by the like power which made the ſettlements. And thus we come to conſider the members of the ſynods of the primitive churches.

And theſe were biſhops, preſbyters, deacons, and deputed lay-men, in behalf of the people of their reſpective churches. At a great ſynod at *Antioch*, which condemned *Paulus Samoſatenus*, there were preſent biſhops, preſbyters, deacons, and the church of God; that is lay-men, who repreſented the people of their ſeveral churches. *Euſeb. l.* 7: *cap.* 30. Alſo when the hereſie of the *Montaniſts* was fixed and preached, the faithful in *Aſia* met together ſeveral times to examine it, and upon examination condemned it. *Euſeb. lib.* 5. *cap.* 16. Alſo there being ſome heats in the church of *Carthage*, about the reſtitution of the lapſed, *Cyprian*, biſhop of that church, writes from exile,---That there ſhould be convened a ſynod of biſhops, and of the laity, who had ſtood firm through the perſecution, to conſult about, and determine their affairs. *Epiſt.* 14. And moreover at a great ſynod held at *Carthage*, *Anno* 258, there were preſent eighty-ſeven biſhops, together with preſbyters and deacons, and a great part of the laity. *Apud Cypri. p.* 443.

The principles of the churches in *New-England*, aſſerting the right of the people in ſynodical meetings, is fully ſet down in the chapter concerning ſynods. *Platf.* And the practice of theſe in harmony with the primitive churches has been all along agreable to it. In the laſt ſynod which was in *New-England*, in the year 1679, ſome churches ſent only their elders without their brethren, with which the ſynod was ſo far unſatisfied, as that they would not allow thoſe paſtors to ſit with them, until they had prevailed with their churches to ſend brethren alſo; being very tender of admiting any thing, that ſhould look like the infringement of that liberty and priviledge, which does

by the inſtitution of Chriſt belong to the brotherhood in particular churches. Dr. *Mather's Order.* 2. 11. I ſhall conclude this head or demonſtration with theſe weighty and ſolemn words of the learned and famous Mr. *Oakes*, præſident of the college, in his election ſermon. Conſider (ſays he) what will be the end of receeding, or making of a defection from the way of church government eſtabliſhed amongſt us. I profeſs that I look upon the diſcovery and ſettlement of the congregational way, as the boon, the gratuity, the largeneſs of divine bounty, which the Lord graciouſly beſtowed on this people, that followed him into this wilderneſs, and who were ſeperated from their brethren. Thoſe good people who came over had more love, zeal, and affectionate deſire of communion with God, in pure worſhip and ordinances, and did more in order to it, than others; and the Lord did more for them than for any people in the world, in ſhewing them the pattern of his houſe, and the truer ſcriptural-way of church government and adminiſtrations. God was certainly in a more than ordinary way preſent with his ſervants, in laying of our foundations; and in ſettling church-order, according to the will and appointment of Chriſt. Conſider what will be the ſad iſſue of revolting from the way fixed on to one extreme or to another, whether it be to preſbyterianiſm or browniſm. 'As for the preſbyterians, it muſt be acknowledged, that there are amongſt them, as pious, learned, ſober, orthodox men, as the world affords; and that there is as much of the power of godlineſs among that party, and of the ſpirit of the good old puritans, as among any people in the world. And as for the ways of their church government, it muſt be confeſſed, that in the day of it, it was a great ſtep to reformation. The reformation in king *Edward's* days, was a bleſſed work, and the reformation of *Geneva* and *Scotland*, was then a larger ſtep, and in many reſpects purer than the other. And for my part, I fully believe that the congregational-way far exceeds both, and is the higheſt ſtep that has been taken towards reformation; and for the ſubſtance of it, it is the very ſame way that was eſtabliſhed and practiſed in the primitive times, according to the inſtitution of Jeſus Chriſt.' Thus ends my firſt demonſtration in a fair parallel drawn up between the holieſt churches that ever were in

the world, and the churches of *New-England*; and however they may differ in their morals, they are very harmonious in their order. And considering that the former cannot rationally be thought but they derived their constitution from the apostles, and so it must needs be of a divine original: and if so then these in *New-England* who are fashioned so exactly like them, must needs be of the same pedigree, &c. But I shall wave all improvement of the premises, and leave the whole to the serious and judicious thoughts of every impartial reader, not doubting but he will find sufficient evidence of the divine original of these churches in what has been said. And that I might now obtain a *supersedeas*, and forbear adding any further plea in their defence. But yet to gratify my own curiosity, and divert the reader, I shall proceed to inquire into the natural reason of the constitution of those churches we have been comparing. In this question I shall go out of the common road, and take into an unusual and unbeaten path; wherein possibly I may fall into some thickets now and then, and be somewhat entangled; yet I hope the candid reader will afford some succour by his tender clemency, and his friendly interpretation of my good intentions. For tho' I may in so devious a way, miss of some part of the truth; yet I have a great presumption that I may open a road to men of greater learning, and a deeper search, that will lead to a rich treasure of knowledge, and wisdom, for ease and relief under those many questions and crabbed debates concerning church-government in the christian world; for to me it seems most apparent, that under Christ the reason of the constitution of these and the primitive churches, is really and truly owing to the original state and liberty of mankind, and founded peculiarly in the light of nature. And thus I come to the

2. Demonstration in defence of our platform, which is founded in the light of nature.

CHAP. I.

THE divine establishment in providence of the forenamed churches, in their order is apparently the royal assent of the supreme monarch of the churches, to the grave decisions of reason in favour of mans natural

ſtate of being, and original freedom. For if we ſhould make a new *ſurvey* of the conſtitution before named under the brighteſt light of nature, there is no greater example of natural wiſdom in any ſettlement on earth ; for the preſent and future ſecurity of human beings in all that is moſt valuable and grand, than in this. That it ſeems to me as though wiſe and provident nature by the dictates of right reaſon, excited by the moving ſuggeſtions of humanity; and awed with the juſt demands of natural liberty, equity, equality, & principles of ſelf-preſervation, originally drew up the ſcheme, and then obtained the royal approbation. And certainly it is agreable that we attribute it to God whether we receive it nextly from reaſon or revelation, for that each is equally an emanation of his wiſdom, *Prov.* 20. 27. The ſpirit of man is the candle of the Lord, ſearching all the inward parts of the belly. There be many larger volumes in this dark receſs called the belly to be read by that candle God has lighted up. And I am very well aſſured the forenamed conſtitution is a tranſcript out of ſome of their pages, John 1. 4, 9. *And the life was the light of men, which lighteth every man which cometh into the world.* This admirable effect of Chriſt's creating power in hanging out ſo many lights to guide man through a dark world, is as applicable to the light of reaſon, as to that of revelation. For that the light of reaſon as a law and rule of right, is an effect of Chriſt's goodneſs, care and creating power, as well as of revelation ; though revelation is natures law in a fairer and brighter edition. This is granted by the London miniſters, *p.* 8. *C.* 3. ' That, that which is evident by, and conſonant to the true light of nature, or natural reaſon, is to be accounted, *Jure Divino*, in matters of religion.' But in the further and more diſtinct management of this plea ; I ſhall,

1. Lay before the reader ſeveral principles of natural knowledge.

2. Apply or improve them in eccleſiaſtical affairs.

3. Infer from the premiſes, a demonſtration that theſe churches, if not properly formed ; yet are fairly eſtabliſhed in their preſent order by the law of nature.

CHAP. II.

1. I Shall diſcloſe ſeveral principles of natural knowledge; plainly diſcovering the law of nature; or the true ſentiments of natural reaſon, with reſpect to mans being and government. And in this eſſay I ſhall peculiarly confine the diſcourſe to two heads, *viz.*

1. Of the natural (in diſtinction to the civil) and then,

2. Of the civil being of man. And I ſhall principally take baron *Puffendorff* for my chief guide and ſpoke-ſman.

1. I ſhall conſider man in a ſtate of natural being, as a free-born ſubject under the crown of heaven, and owing homage to none but God himſelf. It is certain civil government in general, is a very admirable reſult of providence, and an incomparable benefit to mankind, yet muſt needs be acknowledged to be the effect of human free-compacts and not of divine inſtitution; it is the produce of mans reaſon, of human and rational combinations, and not from any direct orders of infinite wiſdom, in any poſitive law wherein is drawn up this or that ſcheme of civil government. Government (ſays the Lord *Warrington*) is neceſſary---in that no ſociety of men can ſubſiſt without it; and that particular form of government is neceſſary which beſt ſuits the temper and inclination of a people. Nothing can be God's ordinance, but what he has particularly declared to be ſuch; there is no particular form of civil government deſcribed in God's word, neither does nature prompt it. The government of the Jews was changed five times. Government is not formed by nature, as other births or productions; if it were, it would be the ſame in all countries; becauſe nature keeps the ſame method, in the ſame thing, in all climates. If a common-wealth be changed into a monarchy, is it nature that forms, and brings forth the monarch? Or if a royal family be wholly extinct (as in *Noah*'s caſe, being not heir apparent from deſcent from Adam) is it nature that muſt go to work (with the kings bees, who themſelves alone preſerve the royal race in that empire) to breed a monarch before the people can have a king, or a government ſent over them? And thus we muſt leave kings to reſolve which is their beſt title to their crowns, whether natural right, or the conſtitution of government ſettled by human compacts,

under the direction and conduct of reason. But to proceed under the head of a state of natural being, I shall more distinctly explain the state of human nature in its original capacity, as man is placed on earth by his maker, and cloathed with many investitures, and immunities which properly belong to man separately considered. As,

1. The prime immunity in mans state, is that he is most properly the subject of the law of nature. He is the favorite animal on earth; in that this part of God's image, *viz.* reason is congenate with his nature, wherein by a law immutable, instampt upon his frame, God has provided a rule for men in all their actions, obliging each one to the performance of that which is right, not only as to justice, but likewise as to all other moral virtues, the which is nothing but the dictate of right reason founded in the soul of man. *Molloy, De Mar, Præf.* That which is to be drawn from mans reason, flowing from the true current of that faculty, when unperverted, may be said to be the law of nature, on which account, the holy scriptures declare it written on mens hearts. For being endowed with a soul, you may know from yourself, how and what you ought to act. Rom. 2. 14. *These having not a law, are a law to themselves.* So that the meaning is, when we acknowledge the law of nature to be the dictate of right reason, we must mean that the understanding of man is endowed with such a power, as to be able, from the contemplation of human condition to discover a necessity of living agreably with this law: And likewise to find out some principle, by which the precepts of it, may be clearly and solidly demonstrated. The way to discover the law of nature in our own state, is by a narrow watch, and accurate contemplation of our natural condition, and propensions. Others say this is the way to find out the law of nature. *fol.* If a man any ways doubts, whether what he is going to do to another man be agreable to the law of nature, then let him suppose himself to be in that other mans room; and by this rule effectually executed, a man must be a very dull scholar to nature not to make proficiency in the knowledge of her laws. But more particularly in pursuing our condition for the discovery of the law of nature, this is very obvious to view, *viz.*

1. A principle of self love, and self preservation, is very predominant in every mans being.

2. A sociable disposition.

3. An affection or love to mankind in general. And to give such sentiments the force of a law, we must suppose a God who takes care of all mankind, and has thus obliged each one, as a subject of higher principles of being, than meer instincts. For that all law properly considered, supposes a capable subject, and a superiour power, and the law of God which is binding, is published by the dictates of right reason as other ways: Therefore says *Plutarch*, to follow God and obey reason is the same thing. But moreover that God has established the law of nature, as the general rule of government, is further illustrable from the many sanctions in providence, and from the peace and guilt of conscience in them that either obey, or violate the law of nature. But moreover, the foundation of the law of nature with relation to government, may be thus discovered. *scil.* Man is a creature extreamly desirous of his own preservation; of himself he is plainly exposed to many wants, unable to secure his own safety and maintenance, without the assistance of his fellows; & he is also able of returning kindness by the furtherance of mutual good; but yet man is often found to be malicious, insolent, and easily provoked, and as powerful in effecting mischief, as he is ready in designing it. Now that such a creature may be preserved, it is necessary that he be sociable; that is, that he be capable and disposed to unite himself to those of his own species, and to regulate himself towards them, that they may have no fair reason to do him harm; but rather incline to promote his interests, and secure his rights and concerns. This then is a fundamental law of nature, that every man as far as in him lies, do maintain a sociableness with others, agreable with the main end and disposition of human nature in general. For this is very apparent, that reason and society render man the most potent of all creatures. And finally, from the principles of sociableness it follows as a fundamental law of nature, that man is not so wedded to his own interest, but that he can make the common good the mark of his aim: and hence he becomes capacitated to enter into a civil state by the law of nature; for without this property in nature, viz. Sociableness,

which is for cementing of parts, every government would soon moulder and dissolve.

2. The second great immunity of man is an original liberty instampt upon his rational nature. He that intrudes upon this liberty, violates the law of nature. In this discourse I shall wave the consideration of mans moral turpitude, but shall view him phyfically as a creature which God has made and furnished essentially with many enobling immunities, which render him the most auguſt animal in the world, and still, whatever has happened since his creation, he remains at the upper-end of nature, and as such is a creature of a very noble character. For as to his dominion, the whole frame of the lower part of the universe is devoted to his use, and at his command, and his liberty under the conduct of right reason, is equal with his trust. Which liberty may be briefly considered, internally as to his mind, and externally as to his person.

1. The native internal liberty of man's nature implies, a faculty of doing or omitting things according to the direction of his judgment. But in a more special meaning, this liberty does not consist in a loose and ungovernable freedom, or in an unbounded licence of acting. Such licence is disagreeing with the condition and dignity of man, and would make man of a lower and meaner constitution than brute creatures ; who in all their liberties are kept under a better and a more rational government, by their instincts. Therefore as *Plutarch* says, Those persons only who live in obedience to reason, are worthy to be accounted free : They alone live as they will, who have learnt what they ought to will. So that the true natural liberty of man, such as really and truely agrees to him, must be understood, as he is guided and restrained by the tyes of reason, and laws of nature ; all the rest is brutal, if not worse.

2. Mans external personal, natural liberty, antecedent to all human parts, or alliances must also be considered. And so every man must be conceived to be perfectly in his own power and dispofal, and not to be controuled by the authority of any other. And thus every man, must be acknowledged equal to every man, since all subjection and all command are equally banished on both sides ; and considering all men thus at liberty, every man, has a prero-

gative to judge for himself, viz. What shall be most for his behoof, happiness and well-being.

3. The third capital immunity belonging to mans nature, is an equality amongst men; which is not to be denied by the law of nature, till man has resigned himself with all his rights for the sake of a civil state; and then his personal liberty and equality is to be cherished, and preserved to the highest degree, as will consist with all just distinctions amongst men of honor, and shall be agreable with the public good. For man has a high valuation of himself, and the passion seems to lay its first foundation (not in pride, but) really in the high and admirable frame and constitution of human nature. The word man says my author, is thought to carry somewhat of dignity in its sound; and we commonly make use of this as the most proper and prevailing arguments against a rude insulter, *viz. I am not a beast or a dog: But am a man as well as yourself.* Since then human nature agrees equally with all persons; and since no one can live a sociable life with another that does not own or respect him as a man; it follows as a command of the law of nature, that every man esteem and treat another as one who is naturally his equal, or who is a man as well as he. There be many popular, or plausible reasons that greatly illustrate this equality, viz. that we all derive our being from one stock, the same common father of human race. On this consideration *Bœthius* checks the pride of the insulting nobility.

Quid Genus et Proavos Strepitis?
Si Primordia Vestra,
Auteremque Deum Spectas,
Nullus Degener Extat
Nisi vitiis Pejora fovens,
Proprium Deserat Orturn.

Fondly our first descent we boast;
If whence at first our breath we drew,
The common springs of life we view,
The airy notion soon is lost.
The almighty made us equal all;
But he that slavishly complys
To do the drudgery of vice,
Denies his high original.

And also that our bodies are composed of matter, frail, brittle, and lyable to be destroyed by thousand accidents;

we all owe our existence to the same method of propagation. The noblest mortal in his entrance on the stage of life, is not distinguished by any pomp or of passage from the lowest of mankind; and our life hastens to the same general mark: Death observes no ceremony, but knocks as loud at the barriers of the court, as at the door of the cottage. This equality being admitted, bears a very great force in maintaining peace and friendship amongst men. For that he who would use the assistance of others, in promoting his own advantage, ought as freely to be at their service when they want his help on the like occasions. One good turn requires another, is the common proverb; for otherwise he must need esteem others unequal to himself, who constantly demands their aid, and as constantly denies his own. And whoever is of this insolent temper, cannot but highly displease those about him, and soon give occasion of the breach of the common peace. It was a manly reproof which *Characacus* gave the *Romans*. *Num Si vos Omnibus*, &c. What! because you desire to be masters of all men, does it follow therefore that all men should desire to be your slaves, for that it is a command of natures law, that no man that has not obtained a particular and special right, shall arrogate to himself a larger share than his fellows, but shall admit others to equal privileges with himself. So that the principle of equality in a natural state, is peculiarly transgressed by pride, which is when a man without sufficient reason, prefers himself to others. And though as *Hensius*, paraphrases upon *Aristotle's* politicks to this purpose. viz. Nothing is more suitable to nature, than that those who excel in understanding and prudence, should rule and controul those who are ill happy in those advantages, &c. Yet we must note, that there is room for an answer, *scil.* That it would be the greatest absurdity to believe, that nature actually invests the wise with a sovereignity over the weak; or with a right of forcing them against their wills; for that no sovereignity can be established, unless some human deed, or covenant precede: Nor does natural fitness for government make a man presently governor over another; for that as *Ulpian* says, *by a natural right all men are born free*; and nature having set all men upon a level and made them equals, no servitude or subjection can be conceived

without inequality ; and this cannot be made without uſurpation or force in others, or voluntary compliance in thoſe who reſign their freedom, and give away their degree of natural being. And thus we come,

2. To conſider man in a civil ſtate of being ; wherein we ſhall obſerve the great difference between a natural, and political ſtate ; for in the latter ſtate many great diſproportions appear, or at leaſt many obvious diſtinctions are ſoon made amongſt men ; which doctrine is to be laid open under a few heads.

1. Every man conſidered in a natural ſtate, muſt be allowed to be free, and at his own diſpoſe ; yet to ſuit mans inclinations to ſociety ; and in a peculiar manner to gratify the neceſſity he is in of public rule and order, he is impelled to enter into a civil community ; and diveſts himſelf of his natural freedom, and puts himſelf under government ; which amongſt other things comprehends the power of life and death over him, together with authority to enjoin him ſome things to which he has an utter averſion, and to prohibit him other things, for which he may have as ſtrong an inclination ; ſo that he may be often under this authority, obliged to ſacrifice his private, for the public good. So that though man is inclined to ſociety, yet he is driven to a combination by great neceſſity. For that the true and leading cauſe of forming governments, and yielding up natural liberty, and throwing mans equality into a common pile to be new caſt by the rules of fellowſhip ; was really and truly to guard themſelves againſt the injuries men were liable to interchangeably ; for none ſo good to man, as man, and yet none a greater enemy. So that,

2. The firſt human ſubject and original of civil power is the people. For as they have a power every man over himſelf in a natural ſtate, ſo upon a combination they can and do bequeath this power unto others ; and ſettle it according as their united diſcretion ſhall determine. For that this is very plain that when the ſubject of ſovereign power is quite extinct, that power returns to the people again. And when they are free, they may ſet up what ſpecies of government they pleaſe ; or if they rather incline to it, they may ſubſide into a ſtate of natural being, if it be plainly for the beſt. In the Eaſtern country of the *Mogul*, we have ſome reſemblance of the caſe ; for

upon the death of an abſolute monarch, they live ſo many days without a civil head; but in that *Interregnum*, thoſe who ſurvive the vacancy, are glad to get into a civil ſtate again; and uſually they are in a very bloody condition when they return under the covert of a new monarch; this project is to indear the people to a tyranny, from the experience they have ſo lately had of an anarchy.

3. The formal reaſon of government is the will of a community, yielded up and ſurrendered to ſome other ſubject, either of one particular perſon, or more, conveyed in the following manner.

Let us conceive in our mind a multitude of men, all naturally free and equal; going about voluntarily, to erect themſelves into a new common-wealth. Now their condition being ſuch, to bring themſelves into a politick body, they muſt needs enter into divers covenants.

1. They muſt interchangeably each man covenant to join in one laſting ſociety, that they may be capable to concert the meaſures of their ſafety, by a public vote.

2. A vote or decree muſt then nextly paſs to ſet up ſome particular ſpecies of government over them. And if they are joined in their firſt compact upon abſolute terms to ſtand to the deciſion of the firſt vote concerning the ſpecies of government: Then all are bound by the majority to acquieſce in that particular form thereby ſettled, though their own private opinion, incline them to ſome other model.

3. After a decree has ſpecified the particular form of government, then there will be need of a new covenant, whereby thoſe on whom ſovereignity is conferred, engage to take care of the common peace, and welfare. And the ſubjects on the other hand, to yield them faithful obedience. In which covenant is included that ſubmiſſion and union of wills, by which a ſtate may be conceived to be but one perſon. So that the moſt proper definition of a civil ſtate, is this, viz. A civil ſtate is a compound moral perſon. Whoſe will (united by thoſe covenants before paſſed) is the will of all; to the end it may uſe, and apply the ſtrength and riches of private perſons towards maintaining the common peace, ſecurity, and well-being of all, which may be conceived as tho' the whole ſtate was now become but one man; in which the aforeſaid covenants may be ſuppoſed under God's providence, to be the

divine *Fiat*, pronounced by God, let us make man. And by way of reſemblance the aforeſaid being may be thus anatomized.

1. The ſovereign power is the ſoul infuſed, giving life and motion to the whole body.

2. Subordinate officers are the joints by which the body moves.

3. Wealth and riches are the ſtrength.

4. Equity and laws are the reaſon.

5. Councellors the memory.

6. *Salus Populi*, or the happineſs of the people, is the end of its being; or main buſineſs to be attended and done.

7. Concord amongſt the members, and all eſtates, is the health.

8. Sedition is ſickneſs, and civil war death.

4. The parts of ſovereignity may be conſidered: So,

1. As it preſcribes the rule of action: It is rightly termed legiſlative power.

2. As it determines the controverſies of ſubjects by the ſtandard of thoſe rules. So is it juſtly termed judiciary power.

3. As it arms the ſubjects againſt foreigners, or forbids hoſtility, ſo its called the power of peace and war.

4. As it takes in miniſters for the diſcharge of buſineſs, ſo it is called the right of appointing magiſtrates. So that all great officers and public ſervants, muſt needs owe their original to the creating power of ſovereignty. So that thoſe whoſe right it is to create, may diſſolve the being of thoſe who are created, unleſs they caſt them into an immortal frame. And yet muſt needs be diſſoluble if they juſtly forfeit their being to their creators.

5. The chief end of civil communities, is, that men thus conjoined, may be ſecured againſt the injuries, they are liable to from their own kind. For if every man could ſecure himſelf ſingly; it would be great folly for him, to renounce his natural liberty, in which every man is his own king and protector.

6. The ſovereign authority beſides, that it inheres in every ſtate as in a common and general ſubject. So farther according as it reſides in ſome one perſon, or in a council (conſiſting of ſome ſelect perſons, or of all

the members of a community) as in a proper and particular ſubject, ſo it produceth different forms of common-wealths, viz. Such as are either ſimple and regular, or mixt.

1. The forms of a regular ſtate are three only, which forms ariſe from the proper and particular ſubject, in which the ſupream power reſides. As,

1. A democracy, which is when the ſovereign power is lodged in a council conſiſting of all the members, and where every member has the privilege of a vote. This form of government, appears in the greateſt part of the world to have been the moſt ancient. For that reaſon ſeems to ſhew it to be moſt probable, That when men (being originally in a condition of natural freedom and equality) had thoughts of joining in a civil body, would without queſtion be inclined to adminiſter their common affairs, by their common judgment, and ſo muſt neceſſarily to gratify that inclination eſtabliſh a democracy; neither can it be rationally imagined, that fathers of families being yet free and independent, ſhould in a moment, or little time take of their long delight in governing their own affairs, and devolve all upon ſome ſingle ſovereign commander; for that it ſeems to have been thought more equitable, that what belonged to all ſhould be managed by all, when all had entered by compact into one community. The original of our government, ſays *Plato*, (ſpeaking of the *Athenian* common-wealth) was taken from the equality of our race. Other ſtates there are compoſed of different blood, and of unequal lines, the conſequence of which are diſproportionable ſovereignity, tyranical or oligarchycal ſway; under which men live in ſuch a manner, as to eſteem themſelves partly lords, and partly ſlaves to each other. But we find our countrymen, being all born brethren of the ſame mother, do not look upon ourſelves to ſtand under ſo hard a relation, as that of lords and ſlaves; but the parity of our deſcent incline us to keep up the like parity by our laws, and to yield the precedency to nothing but to ſuperior virtue and wiſdom. And moreover it ſeems very manifeſt that moſt civil communities aroſe at firſt from the union of families, that were nearly allied in race and blood. And though ancient ſtory make frequent mention of kings, yet it appears that moſt of

them were such that had an influence rather in perswading, than in any power of commanding. So *Justin* discribes that kind of government, as the most primitive, which *Aristotle* stiles an heroical kingdom. *viz.* Such as is no ways inconsistent with a democratical state. *De princip. Rerum.* 1. *L.* 1. *C.*

A democracy is then erected, when a number of free persons, do assemble together, in order to enter into a covenant for uniting themselves in a body: And such a preparative assembly hath some appearance already of a democracy; it is a democracy in *embrio*, properly in this respect, that every man hath the priviledge freely to deliver his opinion concerning the common affairs. Yet he who dissents from the vote of the majority, is not in the least obliged by what they determine, till by a second covenant, a popular form be actually established; for not before then can we call it a democratical government, *viz.* Till the right of determining all matters relating to the public safety, is actually placed in a general assembly of the whole people; or by their own compact and mutual agreement, determine themselves the proper subjects for the exercise of sovereign power. And to compleat this state, and render it capable to exert its power to answer the end of a civil state: These conditions are necessary.

1. That a certain time and place be assigned for assembling.

2. That when the assembly be orderly met, as to time and place, that then the vote of the majority must pass for the vote of the whole body.

3. That magistrates be appointed to exercise the authority of the whole for the better dispatch of business, of every days occurrence; who also may with more mature diligence, search into more important affairs; and if in case any thing happens of greater consequence, may report it to the assembly; and be peculiarly serviceable in putting all public decrees into execution. Because a large body of people is almost useless in respect of the last service, and of many others as to the more particular application and exercise of power. Therefore it is most agreable with the law of nature, that they institute their officers to act in their name, and stead.

2. The second species of regular government, is an aris-

tocracy; and this is said then to be constituted when the people, or assembly united by a first covenant, and having thereby cast themselves into the first rudiments of a state; do then by common decree, devolve the sovereign power, on a council consisting of some select members; and these having accepted of the designation, are then properly invested with sovereign command; and then an aristocracy is formed.

3. The third species of a regular government, is a monarchy, which is settled when the sovereign power is conferred on some one worthy person. It differs from the former, because a monarch who is but one person in natural, as well as in moral account, and so is furnished with an immediate power of exercising sovereign command in all instances of government; but the forenamed must needs have particular time and place assigned; but the power and authority is equal in each.

2. Mixt governments, which are various and of divers kinds (not now to be enumerated) yet possibly the fairest in the world is that which has a regular monarchy; settled upon a noble democracy as its basis. And each part of the government is so adjusted by pacts and laws that renders the whole constitution an *elisium*. It is said of the British empire, that it is such a monarchy, as that by the necessary subordinate concurrence of the lords and commons, in the making and repealing all statutes or acts of parliament; it hath the main advantages of an aristocracy, and of a democracy, and yet free from the disadvantages and evils of either. It is such a monarchy, as by most admirable temperament affords very much to the industry, liberty, and happiness of the subject, and reserves enough for the majesty and prerogative of any king, who will own his people as subjects, not as slaves, It is a kingdom, that of all the kingdoms of the world, is most like to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, whose yoke is easy, and burden light. Present state of England 1st part, 64 *p*. Thus having drawn up this brief scheme concerning man, and the nature of civil government, he is become sole subject of, I shall nextly proceed to make improvements of the premises, to accommodate the main subject under our consideration.

2. I shall now make some improvement of the forego-

ing principles of civil knowledge, fairly deduced from the law of nature. And I shall peculiarly refer to ecclesiastical affairs, whereby we may in probability discover more clearly the kind, and something of the nature of that government, which Christ has placed in and over his church. The learned debates of men, and divine writ sometimes seems to cast such a grandeur on the church and its officers, as though they stood in peerage with civil empire. Rev. 1. 6, 9. 1 Pet. 2. 9. 1 Cor. 4. 8. 1 Cor. 12. 28. 2 Cor. 10. 8. But all such expressions must needs be otherways interpreted. God is the highest cause that acts by council; and it must needs be altogether repugnant, to think he should fore-cast the state of this world by no better a scheme, than to order two sovereign powers, in the same grand community, which would be like placing two suns in the firmament, which would be to set the universe into a flame: That should such an error happen, one must needs be forthwith extinguished, to bring the frame of nature into a just temper and keep it out of harms way. But to proceed with my purpose I shall go back upon the civil scheme, and inquire after two things: First of rebellion against government in general, and then in special; whether any of the aforesaid species of regular government can be predicable of the church of God on earth.

1. In general, concerning rebellion against government, for particular subjects to break in upon regular communites duly established, is from the premises to violate the law of nature; and is a high usurpation upon the first grand immunities of mankind. Such rebels in states, and usurpers in churches affront the world, with a presumption that the best of the brotherhood are a company of fools, and that themselves have fairly monopolized all the reason of human nature: Yea, they take upon them the boldness to assume a prerogative of trampling under foot the natural original equality and liberty of their fellows; for to push the proprietors of settlements out of possession of their old, and impose new schemes upon them, is vertually to declare them in a state of vassalage, or that they were born so; and therefore will the usurper be so gracious as to insure them they shall not be sold at the next market: they must esteem it a favor, for by this time all the original prerogatives of mans nature are intentionally a victim,

finoaking to fatiate the usurpers ambition. It is a very tart observation on an English monarch, and where it may by proportion be applied to a subject must needs sink very deep, and serve for evidence under this head. It is in the secret history of K. C. 2. and K. J. 2. p. 2. says my author, Where the constitution of a nation is such, that the laws of the land are the measures both of the sovereigns commands, and the obedience of the subjects, whereby it is provided; that as the one are not to invade what by concessions and stipulations is granted to the ruler; so the other is not to deprive them of their lawful and determined rights and liberties; then the prince who strives to subvert the fundamental laws of the society, is the traitor and the rebel, and not the people, who endeavor to preserve and defend their own. It's very applicable to particular men in their rebellions or usurpations in church or state.

2. In special I shall now proceed to enquire, whether any of the aforesaid species of regular, unmixt governments, can with any good shew of reason be predicable of the church of Christ on earth. If the churches of Christ, as churches, are either the object or subject of a sovereign power intrusted in the hands of men, then most certainly one of the fore-cited schemes of a perfect government will be applicable to it.

Before I pursue the enquiry, it may not be improper to pause, and make some caution here, by distinguishing between that which may have some resemblance of civil power, and the thing itself; and so the power of churches is but a faint resemblance of civil power; it comes in reality nothing near to the thing itself; for the one is truly coercive, the other persuasive; the one is sovereign power, the other is delegated and ministerial: but not to delay, I shall proceed with my enquiry, and therein shall endeavor to humor the several great claimers of government in the church of Christ. And,

1. I shall begin with a monarchy. It's certain, his holiness, either by reasonable pleas, or powerful cheats, has assumed an absolute and universal sovereignity; this fills his cathedral chair, and is adorned with a triple crown, and in defence thereof does protest, The Almighty has made him both key-keeper of heaven and hell, with

the adjacent territories of purgatory, and vested in him an absolute sovereignity over the christian world. And his right has so far prevailed, that princes and civil monarchs hold their crowns and donations as his dutiful sons, and loyal subjects, he therefore decks himself with the spoils of the divine attributes, stiling himself, our Lord God, *optimum, maximum et supremum numen in Terris* ; a God on earth, a visible deity, and that his power is absolute, and his wisdom infallible. And many of the great potentates of the earth have paid their fealty, as though it was really so. One of them clad in canvas, going bare-foot in the depth of winter, (in obedience to the decree, stinting the pennance in proportion to the wickedness of princes) has waited many days for absolution at his pious gates. Another has thrown himself down prostrate a humble penitent before him : He has placed his holy foot on the monarchs profane neck as crushing a vermine, crawling out of the stable of his sovereignty ; and others frequently kiss his toes with very profound devotion. These and such like triumphant signals of his sovereign power does he wear. And indeed if he is the universal monarch of the catholic church, princes that are members of it must needs knock under ; for that in one world there cannot possibly be two *Most High*'s, any more than two *Infinites*. Thus you see the clergy, or gospel ministry of the christian world have so wisely handled business, and managed the gospel, that they have fairly (as they avouch) found a sovereign power bequeathed in it to the ministry of Christ, and romaging more warily and nicely, at last found a spiritual monarch, very compleatly furnished with the keys of all sorts of power hanging at his girdle ; and may we not pronounce the wiser they ! seeing the world growing weary of religion, was willing to loll itself down to sleep, and leave them in sole trust with the whole interest of God's kingdom. But the sad enquiry is, whether this sort of government has not plainly subverted the design of the gospel, and the end for which Christ's government was ordained, viz. the moral, spiritual, and eternal happiness of men ?

But I have no occasion to pursue this remark with tedious demonstrations : It's very plain, it's written with blood in capital letters, to be read at midnight by the flames of *Smithfield*, and other such like consecrated fires.

That the government of this eccleſiaſtical monarch has inſtead of ſanctifying, abſolutely debauched the world, and ſubverted all good chriſtianity in it. So that without the leaſt ſhew of any vain preſumption we may infer, that God and wiſe nature were never propitious to the birth of this monſter.

2. An ariſtocracy, which places the ſupream power in a ſelect company of choice perſons. Here I freely acknowledge were the goſpel miniſtry eſtabliſhed the ſubject of this power, viz. To will and do, in all church affairs without controul, &c. This government might do to ſupport the church in its moſt valuable rights, &c. If we could be aſſured they would make the ſcripture, and not their private will the rule of their perſonal and miniſterial actions: and indeed upon theſe terms any ſpecies of government, might ſerve the great deſign of redemption; but conſidering how great an intereſt is embarked, and how frail a bottom we truſt, though we ſhould rely upon the beſt of men, eſpecially if we remember what is in the hearts of good men, (viz. much ignorance, abundance of ſmall ends, many times cloked with a high pretence in religion; pride ſkulking and often breeding revenge upon a ſmall affront; and blown up by a pretended zeal; yet really and truly by nothing more divine than intereſt or ill nature) and alſo conſidering how very uncertain we are of the real goodneſs of thoſe we eſteem good men; and alſo how impoſſible it is to ſecure the intail of it to ſucceſſors: and alſo if we remind how chriſtianity by the, foreſaid principle has been peel'd, rob'd and ſpoiled already; it cannot conſiſt with the light of nature to venture again upon ſuch perils, eſpecially if we can find a ſafer way home. More diſtinctly.

It is very plain (allowing me to ſpeak emblematically) the primitive conſtitution of the churches was a democracy as appears by the foregoing parallel. But after the chriſtian churches were received into the favor of the imperial court, under the dominion of *Conſtantine* the great; there being many præliminaries which had furniſhed the miniſters with a diſpoſition thereunto, they quickly deprived the fraternities of their rights in the government of the churches, when they were once provided of a plentiful maintenance through the liberality of *Conſtantine*, that when

christianity was so luxuriantly treated, as by his great bounty, and noble settlement, it is said there was a voice heard from heaven, saying, Now is Poison poured into the church. But the subversion of the constitution, is a story too long now to tell. Take therefore part of it, out of a late author well versed in antiquity, which may give some brief image of the whole.

Non multa fecula jus Plebis Illæsum Manfit, neque Aliter Evenire Potuit, Quin Illud, vel amittatur, vel saltem diminuatur, &c. De Ordina; Diff. Hystorica. P. 36. 40. 41.

The right of the people did not remain unhurt through many ages; neither could it well be otherways, but that it must be lost, or much diminished. *Zonaras* does confess that heretofore bishops were chosen by the suffrage of the people. But many seditions happening among them; it was decreed that every bishop should hereafter be chosen by the authority of the bishops of every province. The cause seemed to be so very specious, that nothing could be more decent, or more conducive to the safety of the common wealth.

Yet (says my author) if you do well weigh the business, you must needs acknowledge nothing could have happened more pernicious or destructive to the church of God. For soon after these things came to pass, it is very obvious, that tyranny over the consciences of the faithful; and an intolerable pride every where grew rampant among the guides of the church. Yet there was one thing still very needful to be done; and that was to establish or confirm the power which the metropolitans, and bishops had acquired to themselves. Therefore they fell to it tooth and nail to drive away the fraternity from all interest in elections: And alas poor hearts! They began to sleep with both ears; that then was scarce any enemy left to interrupt, or controul the conquerors. This was the manner of the clergy till they had made themselves the subjects of all power, and then acted arbitrarily, and did what they pleased in the church of God.

But let the learned, knowing world consider, what the issue of all this was, *scil.* what a wretched capacity the drowsiness and cowardise of the people; and the usurpation and ambition of the ministry brought the professing world

into. If those who were truly godly on both sides had in a few ages look'd down from heaven, and had eyed the following centuries, they might have beheld a world of matter for sorrowful impressions; to think that they themselves had occasioned the ruin of millions, by their remiss and passive temper in one sort; and too much humouring, and nourishing pride, and high conceits of themselves and others, in the other; when as if they had stood firm to the government as left settled by the apostles; they had certainly prevented an apostacy that has damned, and confounded a great part of about thirty generations of men, women and children. That for my own part I can upon experience, in some measure truly say (to the history of the primitive churches in the loss of their government; and the consequents which followed, when I am impelled to repeat it to myself) as one *Eneas* said to queen *Dido*,

Infandum Regina Jubes Renovare Dolorem
------Quis talia fando
Temperet e Lacrimis! -------

So doleful a contemplation is it to think the world should be destroyed by those men, who by God were ordained to save it!

In a word, an aristocracy is a dangerous constitution, in the church of Christ; as it possesses the presbytery of all church power: What has been observed sufficiently evinces it. And not only so but from the nature of the constitution, for it has no more barrier to it, against the ambition, insults, and arbitrary measures of men, than an absolute monarchy. But to abbreviate; it seems most agreable with the light of nature, that if there be any of the regular government settled in the church of God it must needs be,

3. A democracy. This is a form government, which the light of nature does highly value, and often directs to, as most agreable to the just and natural prerogatives of human beings. This was of great account, in the early times of the world. And not only so, but upon the experience of several thousand years, after the world had been tumbled, and tost from one species of government to another, at a great expence of blood and treasure, many of the wise nations of the world have sheltered themselves under it again; or at least have blendished, and balanced their governments with it.

It is certainly a great truth, *scil.* That mans original

liberty after it is reſigned, (yet under due reſtrictions) ought to be cheriſhed in all wiſe governments; or otherwiſe a man in making himſelf a ſubject, he alters himſelf from a freeman, into a ſlave, which to do is repugnant to the law of nature. Alſo the natural equality of men amongſt men muſt be duly favored; in that government was never eſtabliſhed by God or nature, to give one man a prerogative to inſult over another; therefore in a civil, as well as in a natural ſtate of being, a juſt equality is to be indulged ſo far, as that every man is bound to honor every man, which is agreable both with nature and religion, 1 Pet. 2. 17. *Honor all men.* The end of all good government is to cultivate humanity, and promote the happineſs of all, and the good of every man in all his rights, his life, liberty, eſtate, honor, &c. without injury or abuſe done to any. Then certainly it cannot eaſily be thought, that a company of men, that ſhall enter into a voluntary compact, to hold all power in their own hands, thereby to uſe and improve their united force, wiſdom, riches and ſtrength for the common and particular good of every member, as is the nature of a democracy; I ſay it cannot be that this ſort of conſtitution, will ſo readily furniſh thoſe in government with an appetite, or diſpoſition to prey upon each other, or embezle the common ſtock; as ſome particular perſons may be apt to do when ſet off, and intruſted with the ſame power. And moreover this appears very natural, that when the aforeſaid government or power, ſettled in all, when they have elected certain capable perſons to miniſter in their affairs, and the ſaid miniſters remain accountable to the aſſembly; theſe officers muſt needs be under the influence of many wiſe cautions from their own thoughts (as well as under confinement by their commiſſion) in their whole adminiſtration: And from thence it muſt needs follow that they will be more apt, and inclined to ſteer right for the main point, viz. The peculiar good, and benefit of the whole, and every particular member fairly and ſincerely. And why may not theſe ſtand for very rational pleas in church order?

For certainly if Chriſt has ſettled any form of power in his church he has done it for his churches ſafety, and for the benefit of every member: Then he muſt needs be preſumed to have made choice of that government as ſhould leaſt expoſe his people to hazard, either from the fraud,

or arbitrary measures of particular men. And it is as plain as day light, there is no species of government like a democracy to attain this end. There is but about two steps from an aristocracy to a monarchy, and from thence but one to a tyranny; an able standing force, and an ill nature, *Ipso facto*, turns an absolute monarch into a tyrant; this is obvious among the Roman *Cæsars*, and through the world. And all these direful transmutations are easier in church affairs (from the different qualities of things) than in civil states. For what is it that cunning and learned men can't make the world swallow as an article of their creed, if they are once invested with an uncontroulable power, and are to be the standing orators to mankind in matters of faith and obedience? indeed some very wise and learned men are pleased to inveigh, and reproach the notion of a democracy in the church, which makes the *Cetu fidelium* or community of the faithful the first subject of the power of government. This they say tends to *Brownism*, and abhorred anarchy, and then say they upon such præmises, it must needs follow that every member of the body must be an officer; and then every one must preach and dispense the sacraments, *&c.*

Reply. Certainly such gentlemen, either designs to pose and baffle their reader with falacy; or they themselves never took up, or understood the true ideas of the several species of government; in that a democracy is as regular a form, and as particular as any other.

For,

1. An absolute or limited monarch can't manage the power or government devolved upon him, without the great officers of the crown, or a large set of ministers; though possibly he may with quicker dispatch issue out his decrees, yet he must execute all by his ministry. And why may not a democracy be indulged the same liberty? And this will prevent all anarchy or confusion most apparently. But,

2. The bitter pill to swallow in this doctrine of a democracy in the church, is the terrible power of life and death; or the accountableness of particular members to the assembly, and especially those in the ministry; but yet this is agreable with the nature of the constitution, and easily

managed without anarchy, or popular confusion also, which would be made very evident, if we should but run the parallel in all points between the democracy of the state and church. But nextly from the premises, I shall

3. Infer, That if these churches are not properly formed, yet are fairly established in their present order by the law of nature. And will they be advised, I would exhort them to try who will be so bold as to dare to dissieze them. A monarchy has been tried in the church with a witness, but it has absolutely failed us. An aristocracy in a deep calm threw the democracy overboard, and took not only the helm in hand, but seized ship and cargo as their right and title; but after some time brought all to ship-wreck, and that in a good harbour too.

A democracy was the noble government which beat out in all the bad weather of ten bloody persecutions under the management of antiquity. And this is our constitution, and what can't we be pleased? This constitution is as agreable with the light and laws of nature as any other whatsoever, as has been fairly laid down and fully evinced, and more accommodated to the concerns of religion than any other. Therefore I shall now conclude my demonstration with this brief appeal to the common reason of mankind, viz.

How can it consist with the honorable terms man holds upon here on earth; that the best sort of men that we can find in the world; such men as are adorned with a double sett of enobling immunities, the first from nature, the other from grace; that these men when they enter into charter-party to manage a trade for heaven, must *ipso facto* be clapt under a government, that is arbitrary and dispotic; yea that carries the plain symptoms of a tyranny in it, when the light of nature knows of a better species, and frequently has made use of it? It wants no farther demonstration, for its most apparent, that nature is so much mistress of herself, that man in a natural state of being, is under God the first subject of all power, and therefore can make his own choice, and by deliberate compacts, settles his own conditions for the government of himself in a civil state of being: And when a government so settled shall throw itself from its foundations, or the subjects of sovereign power shall subvert or confound the constitution, they

then degrade themſelves ; and ſo all power returns again to the people, who are the firſt owners. And what ! Is man become ſo unfortunate, degraded and debaſed, as to be without all power in ſettling a government over himſelf, relating to the matters of his eternal well-being ? Or when he comes back to a fathers houſe, muſt he fall into the capacity, of a meer paſſive being, and be put under ſuch tutors, as can eaſily turn tyrants over him, and no relief left for him in his own hands ; this is certainly moſt repugnant to the light of nature, and very diſagreable with the liberty and free genius of a goſpel ſtate. Nay, in a word, if the government of the churches be ſettled by God, either in the hands of a church monarch, or ariſtocracy, and the people are no ways the ſubject of church power : Nay, if they are not under Chriſt, the fountain of power ; then the reformation ſo called, is but a meer cheat, a ſchiſm, and notorious rebellion ; neither is there room left for the leaſt paliation, or ſhadow of excuſe, for the reformers in renouncing their obedience to their public governors. And the Martyrologies which pretend to immortalize the fame of eminent heroes, muſt be changed into chronicles, handing along an account of the juſt and deſerved fate of a crew of rebels againſt God and government ; for what buſineſs had ſuch a company of illiterate and crack brain'd fellows to meddle with their rulers, or examine into their adminiſtrations ? for if they have no right of power in government, they ſtand abſolutely bound to yield a paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance ; and if they are ſo hardy and daring as to oppoſe their lawful rulers, the ſharpeſt penalty in this world, is two eaſy for them : the inquiſition is but dallying and playing with them, hell is their deſert. But how it comes about that a ſtate of grace, when in want of a ſuitable government, is become ſuch a vaſſal, and wife and cunning nature is by her creator intruſted, and adorned with more enobling prerogatives, I muſt leave, and reſign unto thoſe learned men to ſolve, who plead for an ariſtocracy in the churches of Chriſt.

But to wind up the whole diſcourſe in a few words, I acknowledge many objections may be here made, and ſeveral queſtions of moment might here fall under debate ; but having obtained what I have principally ſought for, in traverſing the paths of nature, in the three following particulars ; therefore with them, and with one objection an-

swered; and also with some brief improvement of the grand hypothesis in this demonstration, I shall finish the argument.

1. Three particulars; or so many golden maxims, securing the honor of congregational churches.

Particular 1. That the people or fraternity under the gospel, are the first subject of power; or else religion sinks the dignity of human nature into a baser capacity with relation to ecclesiastical, than it is in, in a natural state of being with relation to civil government.

Particular 2. That a democracy in church or state, is a very honorable and regular government according to the dictates of right reason. And therefore,

Particular 3. That these churches of New-England, in their ancient constitution of church order; it being a democracy, are manifestly justified and defended by the law and light of nature.

2. The objection. The plea from the law of nature for a democracy in the church, is as forceable for any other species of government; because nature is furnished with such a variety of schemes as has been pleaded to: And why may not the wise christian nations take which likes them best?

Answ. We must distinguish between man left solely to the direction of the law of nature, and as the subject of revelation, wherein divine wisdom may interpose; and determine on some particular species, without hurting or crossing the law of nature, Therefore,

1. I readily grant and acknowledge, a christian people may settle what species of government they please, when they are solely left to determine by the law of nature, what government in the church they will have. But then we must remember, that by the argument or concession, the power is originally in the people; and then our own case is secure and safe enough; both on the account of the reversion of power, and especially, for that the people the first subjects of power, have been pleased to settle a democracy for their government, in the churches of this country. And if after the peaceable possession of about an hundred years, any persons can perswade them to alter their government into any other species, this will be less worthy of blame, than craftily, or unfairly to force it out of their hands.

2. It's granted, that according to the light of nature,

there be various regular models of government; but if divine wisdom is pleased to interpose and over-rule natures agitations, and cast the scales for this or that particular form, nature will be but fair mannered to submit to its author and rector. So that if we find that God has disclosed his mind by revelation, that his churches be the subjects of a democracy, then all stand obliged to comply under a double bond. And so we come under a proper crisis to enquire in the next place for scripture-evidence in the justification of these churches.

But before I proceed to it, I shall

3. Make some brief improvement of the main *Hypothesis* in the demonstration; that is to say, if the government of the gospel churches, be a democracy, these consequences must necessarily follow, *scil.*

1. *Conf.* That the right of convoking councils ecclesiastical, is in the churches.

2. *Conf.* That such a council has only consultative not a juridical power in it. A juridical power committed to such a representative body is both needless, and also dangerous to the distinct and perfect states they derive from. Compleat states settled upon a body of immutable and imperial laws as its basis, may want council; but to create a new subject of juridical power, is some way to endanger the being of the creators.

3. *Conf.* That all the members of an ecclesiastical council, deriving from a democracy are subjects of equal power. Whatever the power is, the several delegates must from the nature of the government they derive from, be equal sharers in it. Democratical states, in their representative body can make but one house, because they have but one subject of supream power in their nature, and therefore their delegates, let them be who or what they may be, are under equal trust; so that none can justly claim superiority over their fellows, or pretend to a higher power in their suffrage. Indeed in such kingdoms, where the sovereign power is distributed and settled in divers subjects, that the ballance of power may be more even, for the safety of the whole, and of all parts under all acts of sovereign power: From such a settlement of power, there arises several distinct states in the same government, which when convened as one subject of sovereign power, they make different houses in their grand sessions; and so one house or

ſtate can negative another. But in every diſtinct houſe of theſe ſtates, the members are equal in their vote; the moſt ayes make the affirmative vote, and moſt no's the negative: They don't weigh the intellectual furniture, or other diſtinguiſhing qualifications of the ſeveral voters in the ſcales of the golden rule of fellowſhip; they only add up the ayes, and the no's, and ſo determine the ſuffrage of the houſe.

Demonſtration III.

From Holy Scripture.

THIS plea has with ſuch variety of argument, and illuſtration, and by many repetitions, been purſued, by a great number of perſons eminent for learning and piety, that I might here very fairly releaſe myſelf from this taſk. But yet to compleat the number of my arguments, I will briefly ſum up the demonſtration for the readers uſe under a few heads.

1. Head. It muſt needs be allowed, as a fundamental principle relating to government, that (under God) all power is originally in the people. No man I think will deny it to be a very good principle in civil knowledge. But if any man will, I imagine it is ſufficiently ſet forth in the former demonſtration. And it is very plain that religion does always cultivate, and increaſe, rather than diminiſh any of natures juſt prerogatives. That it muſt needs ſtand for a paradox, or a riddle not to be expounded; if man is more of a ſlave by his religion than by his nature.

But let us take a brief view of man by ſcripture account under a religious notion, as the ſubject of grace, and he ſeems then not to have the leaſt ſpeck of vaſſalage in him; but is repreſented as though lord of himſelf and owner of heaven, and earth both, 1 Cor. 3. 22.---*all are yours.*

And though its very certain that man has greatly debaſed himſelf by his apoſtacy; yet ſtill God puts abundance of honor upon him in his reduction. As we may conſider man in a remark or two, under the meaſures of divine grace in reſtoring him to favor. Firſt, God treats him as a creature of a very honorable character, as free and at his own diſpoſe. Or as though he were ſome high and mighty ſtate placed at the top of this globe. Therefore he courts him into an alliance as though he were likely to yield great honor to the crown. *We are ambaſſadors*---

as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead-----be reconciled to God, 2 Cor. 5. 20. This is much the tenor of Gods heralds in their addresses of capitulation. That certainly if God did not highly estimate man, as a creature exalted, by his reason, liberty and nobleness of nature, he would not caress him as he does in order to his submission ; but rather with some peevish and haughty monarch, or the bloody Mahomet, send his demands at the mouth of his canon. But instead of such harsh measures, they are treated with the highest reason, attended with lenity and great acts of condescension. Nay, divine menaces are frequently cloathed with such soft language as this ; *turn ye ! turn ye ! Why will ye dye !* Yea under all impulsive means, which God wisely and graciously makes use of to gain mans consent, he sets the will to turn about itself without forcing it, that so mans religion may be the free and candid emanations of his noble and exalted nature. But when God has thus gained man ; may we rationally imagine that in erecting his trophies he will assign and make him over to some petty and arbitrary potentates in matters of religion ? or settle him under a despotic government as tho' he was the spoils of a spiteful war ? No certainly, but man must now be considered as some high allie invested with more power than ever. This would still be more evident if we should consider what Christ has done and how they stand joint heirs with him in his purchase and kingdom, *Rom.* 8. 1, 16, 17.

2. Head. The power placed in man that enables him to manage religious affairs, is not sovereign, but limited and confined power. (1) All laws are enacted already, and, (2.) There is no coercive power needful in the church. The highest act in administring judicature, is excluding a person out of the society. In the church there is no fees or fines, &c. In civil empire to keep mankind in any good decorum, there's much hard work to be done, in peace and war ; under mein process, and in criminal causes. There's forming of armies, raising the posse comitatus, building of castles, &c. cropping of ears, chopping off heads, and what not ! so that civil government has need of an immence power as well as treasure, and to be cloathed with brass and iron. But as for the church of God, faith, prayers and tears, are generally their best weapons against the hostility of foreigners ; and in the government of their

home-born, it may be done by ſoft words, or hard words, 1 Theſ. 5. 12. Heb. 3. 13.---10. 24. 25. So that the buſineſs does not require abundance of external force, or form of government. That it's a thouſand pities to make ſuch a great noiſe and buſtle in the world about church power, as though the ſubjects of it were to furniſh armies and navies to encounter half the potentates on earth in defence of the church. When alas good men! as to all occaſion for power its quite another thing; and the exerciſe of it generally falls within reach of an ordinary reaſon. That certainly whatever the right of the brotherhood is as to the original of power; there cannot be abundance of bad omens in allowing them ſome ſhare in church judicatory.

3. Head. Power-----this word ſeems to be all thunder. But however; it is very copious and may be applyed to God and his creatures. It is predicable of the latter, in their different claſſes and orders, of being, and none ſo weak but have ſome ſhare of it. But to confine the word to polity, &c. It is by ſome thus defined, viz.

Power or authority----Is that whereby a man may claim, or challenge any thing to ones ſelf, without the injury of another, upon a ſuppoſition, this is a true definition.

Query. *Whether chriſtian people may not claim or challenge the following rights or prerogatives without doing injury to any*, viz.

1. Whether if they are pleaſed (a ſuitable number of them) to enter into a religious ſociety, by punctual and voluntary compacts to ſupport the worſhip of God in the world; whether this may not be done without injuring and then,

2. When ſo united, whether they may not chuſe their own officers. (3.) Diſcipline their own members. (4) Repreſent themſelves upon proper emergencies, by their delegates; (all which are the principal pillars of a democracy,) whether I ſay they, can't do all theſe without injury done to any others? But to proceed a little farther in opening the nature of power. If we unite *Dunamis* and *Exouſia, viz.* Strength of nature, and authority of inſtitution into one propoſition. Then political power may be thus defined. *ſcil.*

Power is an ability, furniſhed with a lawful right to act. Now upon a preſumption of the validity of this propoſi-

tion ; power may be easily apprehended as vested in every church, and in every member and officer of a church, according to the nature, degree and duty of each subject of power ; and may act and exert their several powers and authorities without any incongruity, or interfering one with another.

4. Head. That a gospel church essentially considered as a body incorporated, is the subject of all church power. Though a church thus considered cannot formally exercise all branches of power belonging to it : neither can the subject of sovereign power itself exert all acts of power till fitted with proper organs or a suitable ministry, and yet it can't be denied but that all power really, and all acts of power virtually, must needs be in it. And so in a church.

Therefore as to church power in the exercise of it ; it may be distributed into what belongs (1) To the combination of many, viz. The power of judgment and donation. Or, (2.) To what belongs to one or more set off for that end, viz. The power of office. This distribution Mr. *Hooker* pursues with great illustration. *Surv. p. 1. p.* 187. Here I shall confine myself to the consideration of the exercise of that power which belongs to the brotherhood in distinction to office power. Which principle I shall pursue by evincing the truths of the following proposition. *scil.*

That the scripture does warrant a government in gospel churches, consisting of the exercise of several distinct powers inherent in the fraternity, in distinction to office trust. This may be evinced.

1. By the recitation of the several distinct powers themselves.

2. By the dignity which the scriptures puts upon the churches as free states, and subjects of power in distinction from their officers.

1. By the recitation of the several distinct powers ; both preparitory to, and resulting from their combination.

1. There is a preparatory power in them both as rational & sanctified beings of forming themselves into churches. This affirmation seems to me as fully contained in the genuine sense of scripture, as though written in some divine manifesto, in such terms as these, viz. Let this be

proclaimed through all the earth, that I the Lord Jesus Christ, have invested all holy and good christian people, both by nature and grace with power, to enter into church order, for the advance of my name, and their own edification. If we had such an article in scripture written in terms, we should have made great use of it in justifying our constitution; for it plainly settles all power originally (under Christ) in the people. And then if such a power or faculty be in them when in separate parts, as to assemble, and enter into solemn engagements, and thereby to enter into a church state; it necessarily follows, that having imbodied they may easily go forward and provide for their own well-being. He that hath read the gospel, and observed how many churches are mentioned, without notice taken, of the manner of their origination, must needs allow the observation to be a fair consequence from it. It being so agreable with the light of nature.

2. The powers resulting from their combination may be more distinctly recited.

1. Power. The election of officers. Officers are for the well-being, and compleating of any state. There is no regular government can well subsist without them; these are the hands, the eyes, the ears and feet of government in administration. To separate qualified persons to the highest office trust in a state, is by civilians attributed to the creating power of sovereignity. So that it must needs be a great power belonging to the church under this head, and that it is the churches prerogative I might reason; *Ex Jure Superioritatis.* For that the church is superior to its officers; and not the officers to the church. For that churches are not made for officers, but officers for churches; therefore says the apostle, 1 Cor. 3. 22. *All things are yours----whether Paul, or Apollos or Cephas.* But I shall principally depend upon the example and practice of the apostolical church under this head. It is a celebrated saying of *Cyprian* in pressing, Acts 1. 26. To confirm the power of the people in chusing and refusing their officers. *Plebs Christiana maxime potestatem habet, vel Dignos Sacerdotes Eligendi, vel indignos Recusandi.* The highest power of electing worthy officers and rejecting unworthy is in the people. For the whole church, says *Terrettinus (de Jure Voc.) Duos Eligit*, chuses two to undergo the lot for [illegible] that they might supply the

vacancy by the death of *Judas*, Acts 1. 23, 26. And indeed it is contrary to all civility and reason to imagine the apostles would be so trivial in their ministry, or prodigal of their own authority, as to indulge the fraternity in such actions, viz. Such as electing an extraordinary officer, if the election of officers did not belong to them. So in the choice of the deacons mentioned, Acts. 6. 2, 3, 5. The twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said-----brethren look you out seven men, whom we may appoint over this business. The saying pleased the whole multitude and they chose Stephen, &c. It must needs be very surprizing, if the apostles should thus dignify, and intrust the brethren with a prerogative of electing these officers, if the power of election was not inherent in them. That unless anyone can fairly make it out that the apostles were either in jest, or did they know not what, in directing the brethren, to do as they did in the recited examples; it must needs stand for a truth that the power of electing officers is in the fraternity of the church, by the judgment of Christ's apostles.

2. Power judicatory, Mat. 18. 15, 20. This paragraph of holy writ, lays open a scheme of juridical power in the subject of it; that is the church: and this is to be observed, that from the first commencement of the process to the final issue in the execution of the obstinate and criminal member, all is to be ascribed to the authority of the church; for what business has one man to interrupt another in his crimes and unlawful pleasures, unless he has power so to do? And how comes one man to have power over another, unless conquest, hostility, or compacts have made them liable, as members of the same community, or subjects of the same government? Therefore the offended person, proceeding regularly for detecting a delinquent, must needs be supposed to derive his power from the same fountain, viz. the sessions were the case is finally to issue by execution. And the subject of this power is the church. *Tell the church.*

But moreover, let it be considered, that to speak by way of allusion, there be several removes of the action of trespass, from one hearing to another; as though it go from an inferior to a superior sessions, and that Christ was here in this precept, settling inferior and superior assizes in his kingdom. And indeed there cannot be a wiser

ſcheme drawn up, that ſhall carry the aſpect of more grace, love, humility, tender regard to honour, and alſo juſtice than this ; both for the encouragement of religion, the awing of ſpectators, and keeping the church pure.

But to proceed,

1. In making out proceſs, the firſt trial is to be had at the aſſizes of a mans own intellectual powers, reaſon, conſcience, &c. being aſſembled, are to ſet in judgment, hear the pleas, and the indictment being read and juſtified, muſt paſs ſentence; and at this bar the caſe may be fairly iſſued. *If he ſhall hear thee thou haſt gained thy brother.* So that moſt certainly the plaintiff has a right to enter his caſe at this ſeſſions, and here we ſee it may be iſſued ; then certainly this is a branch of the power of judicature ; otherwiſe an agrieved perſon might expect a very ſevere repulſe from a ſturdier offender, for interrupting a mans repoſe of mind in his own actions. What ſaucy clown is that ? who dare challenge my conſcience with the cognizance of any crime ? Bold-face ! where's you commiſſion ; *Who made thee a ruler*, Acts 7. 27. In civil affairs particular men when injured, muſt not make bold to correct an ordinary treſpaſs upon their perſons, or intereſts, but by forms of law ; if they do, eſpecially if by meaſures which are grievous, they may be indicted themſelves, for diſturbers of the peace ; That certainly this branch of the text refers to a legal bar, and lawful power. So that the complaining party may commence his ſuit with boldneſs, produce his pleas, and demand juſtice. But the critical queſtion is, *Who is judge of this court ?* Certainly it is ſome lay-mans powers, ſuppoſed to be very competent judges, as ſufficiently ſkilled in the rules of court, and how to apply them. And why may not all the judges contained in the whole ſeries of judicatory laid open in this text, be of the ſame ſort ? for that the caſe is not ſo deep, but that the firſt judges and ſeſſions it comes before, are ſuppoſed by our wiſe Saviour and law-giver, capable fully to underſtand and traverſe it ; and do juſtice and judgment upon it ; to a final iſſue. But,

2. Upon a defeat the proceſs goes forward, by removing the ſuit by an appeal to a more impartial hearing. The next ſeſſions therefore by review, is to conſiſt of one or two of the brethren. *(Take one or two more.)* But poſſibly ſome may be ready to ſay, ah ! *We are like to have*

very good justice, before so wise a sessions! Well, it is what Christ has appointed, and let us keep his path, and it will bring us safe home; for that these persons are commissioned by Christ, as capable judges, and therefore are to exercise one branch of the power fixed in the church. But when the case is gone thus far through the law, and the adverse party will not submit to the last verdict that is brought in, the case must be removed again. For that,

3. It is allowed to have one trial more, and no more; and that is to be before the church. For if he hear not the church, he shall be as an heathen man, &c. that is to say, the church shall then issue out execution, which is the end of the law.

Object. But the great and stupendous objection, which crosses our way, is, that the governing church is here meant; that is to say, the presbytery in their classes, and several sessions, till you come home to the last appeal?

Answ. 1. It is very unscriptural to force such an interpretation on the text; for if we consider the etimology, and universal acceptation of the word church, the objection will be found very defective, both in its rhetorick and divinity. There being no harbour for it, within the sense of *Farnby*'s tropes or figures. And as for its divinity, let the objection but cite one text more, wherein church is mentioned, and officers are intended, and we will resign. But without it to yield so great an interest upon so slender a claim is repugnant to justice and honor. But,

2. How can wise men manage their souls, or bring them into such a figure as to think that Christ should have such a far reach in his thoughts in such easy cases as are plainly contained in the text? The notions in the objections are plainly ridiculous to the light of nature, in that civil measures adjust according to the degree and nature of suits and cases. A cause of twelve-pence is triable by a single justice, and one appeal brings the suit to the end of the law. Indeed cases which are of greater weight and value have a larger scope in the law allowed them, &c. And what! Is there the least shadow for a pretence that such cases as are within our text, viz. such as may be issued by one single brother making his suit to his brothers reason and conscience, &c. or by two at the most, and that at the sole charge of a few honest pleas from the heads of charity or piety? I say, are these cases so grand as to be transmitted from one classis to another, till they arrive at the

chief seat where the definitive sentence is to be given forth? There is apparently some great fallacy in the objection, or certainly our blessed Saviour did not state his cases right; for let us again consider, who must sign the bill of cost at last? or who must bear all the charges of writings, witnesses, travels of horses and men; and for all expence of time and money, from the sessions first mentioned, and so from sessions to sessions, and from classis to classis, until all is brought to a final issue? when as possibly the original writ of process, or first action, might not contain in real civil damage, a farthing more than about a groat or six-pence. And what can we think that our wise Saviour would adjust his settlements at no better a rate than this comes to? *vah! prob Dolor!* Men have plainly made a fool of mankind by corrupting this text, whereby they have set the discipline of the church at such a charge, that millions of millions have run out in waste, to humour their ambition; when as the wise and innocent churches of God in their single capacities would have done better justice, and have drained nothing more from you, than some tears of contrition.

For,

3. What is more natural, than to imagine a church of believers, with their set of graces, and common prudence, (especially when under the influence of a regular ministry) should be held capable to execute this rule, according to the full sense of it; yea, tho' they bring the delinquent in the traverse of the case, to the highest censure. Indeed it must be acknowledged, that excommunication, major or minor, is an awful result of authority; yet not really in every respect, and in all degrees quite so bitter as death itself: And yet death is very frequently dispens'd to capital sinners, and that solely by the verdict of their peers, viz. Twenty-four good and lawful men of the vicinage, are in forms of law a sufficient judicatory to take away a mans life, and the venerable bench of judges must not over rule, but stand and say, Amen, in that good justice is done in the world by such a small company of illiterate men, the law having assigned them to this service. To the foregoing precept, let us join Col. 4. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 12. Rev. 2. 20. 1 Thes. 5. 14. Gal. 6. 1.

Now to conclude, let the reader lay all these scriptures together, which contain rules of judicatory for the churches;

and then let him answer me with good reason if he can, and tell me why these scriptures may not be esteemed the churches *Magna Charta*, in matters of censure and judicature; as well as that be held such a golden rule in the judicial proceedings of English government, mentioned in the great charter of Englishs liberties, chap. 29. No freeman shall be taken, or imprisoned, or be dissesed of his freehold, liberty or free customs, or be out-law'd or exiled, or any other ways destroyed, nor will we press upon him nor condemn him, but by lawful judgment of his peers. Now gentlemen! Don't you think that the Lord Jesus Christ, the king of heaven, is as careful and tender of his subjects, as the king of England is of his? And indeed, why should not each sett of subjects be equally and alike guarded from the hazard of oppression, or the arbitrary measures of each ministry unless those that belong to the gospel, are formed out of a distinct clay from each other?

3. Power. To represent themselves in synodical conventions, for the establishment of this power in the churches. See Acts 15. 2. 22. 23. And for a more ample display and confirmation of this point, I refer the reader to the excellent treatise of Dr. *Increase Mather*, in his disquisition concerning *ecclesiastical councils*.

2. The dignity which the scripture puts upon the churches as free states, and subjects of power in distinction from their officers.

It is very plain that most of the epistles of St. *Paul* which make up a great part of the canon of scripture, were directed to the body of the brotherhood, and peculiarly adapted for their use, with little or no notice at all taken of the ministry therein.

In sum, when he was just concluding his letter and winding up his discourse with his grace and respects to some choice christian friends, he puts the officers in with them, and orders the brotherhood to give his salutations to them as persons unconcerned with the contents of the epistle, Heb. 13. 24. In the last verse but one in the whole epistle, says the apostle, *Salute all them that have the rule over*. That whatever other meanings may be in such methods of divine writings, they must needs respect some high power and trust vested in the churches. Those epistles sent to the angels of the churches of *Asia*; the principal share of those letters literally taken, which belonged to the officers,

is but the superscription ; the contents of the letters are immediately directed to the fraternity. Where there is any thing amiss the fraternity is reprehended : Where there is any thing worthy of credit, they are commended. Or if there is any thing in point of order or discipline to be done they are directed and commanded. All is to the churches. Therefore it is said again and again, *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches*, Rev. 1. 7, &c. Finally, let any considerate man but read and well ponder the epistles to the *Corinthian*, *Ephesian*, &c. churches, and observe the characters of the brotherhood ; with the precepts how they shall act personally and with authority one towards another, &c. he must then needs subject his mind to the force of this conclusion, *scil.* That Christ's gospel churches in their fraternities, are not such cyphers as they stand in some men's accounts ; but are really and truly proper bodies full of powers, and authorities, for the government of themselves and all their concerns, as all democracies are.

Demonstration IV.

From the excellent nature of the constitution, in that it exceeds all that have been yet extant in the christian world. This I shall endeavor to illustrate by three pleas. *Plea* I.

In that it best suits the great and noble designs of the gospel, and that in a peculiar manner as it tends to the promoting holiness in the world ; not only from the strict nature of the constitution in the admission of members, whence the churches become a more exact emblem of heaven, both for the illuminating and dreading of others, that beholding their goodness, may glorify God in the day of visitation. 1 Pet. 2. 12. But from the great advantage put into the hands of the best sort of men, (solid, pious, wise and unbias'd men) of furnishing a country with persons eminently qualified for the ministry, and keeping them so. There is no lurking place for *Symony* in this constitution. There is no buying and selling of offices, whereby the world has been miserably cheated, and debauched. Here is no back stairs for cousins and favorites to climb up to high seats without desert ; it is merit and intrinsic worth sets the value, and holds the strongest plea for preferment here. Hence every village, and corner of a town, where religious congregations are settled, are furnished with persons for the gospel ministry of such

learning, and bright saints, and of such real and distinguishing virtue and zeal; that they must needs be very prevalent in carrying on the main design, &c. But this plea is fully pursued by Dr. Owen, in his enquiry, &c. (p. 120 and so on) whither I refer the reader that wants more satisfaction.

Plea II.

For that it has the best ballance belonging to it of any church-government in the world. Other governments have generally too high a top, and are very lopsided too; nay the best we can meet with without vanity or envy it may be said, that not only seem ugly like *Grantham* steeple, but really it stands awry, and being so overloaded on nature's corrupt side, with learning, power and high trust, it plainly hangs over several degrees from a true perpendicular, towards Babylon: And if it falls it buries you; and then you must remember it has monopolized all power, so that you have none left to stir under your load, or creep out with. But here's a government so exactly poised, that it keeps its motions regular like the stupenduous spheres, unless some *Phaeton* chance to mount the chariot box, and becomes the driver. I have sufficiently, I think, evinced the power in the brotherhood; and though every church is a body consisting of very numerous parts and a noble ministry, yet the balance of power is very exactly and with great advantage preserved; both between the members of the body in general, and between themselves, and their public ministry in special.

1. Between the members of the body. For besides, the wisdom, love and other enobling principles, in some measure actuating every member. The venerable major vote, which guides and governs the august states of parliaments; nay all assembly's superior and inferior, that have any equality of power dispersed amongst the members, ordinarily keeps the whole body, in all points of administration, in an exact equipoise.

2. And as for the state of the ministry; there is no grain of allowance wanted on their side, to make their office power, if not an even ballance arithmetically upon an accurate, and distressing trial: yet in the series of a laudable ministration, it is an equivalent of power; at least according to the terms of our constitution, *Platf. C. Po. Sect. II.* But let the case be stated as accurately,

as may be, and let every fair principle which grants the power to be originally in the people, be yielded: and alſo eſtabliſh a proper judicature in the brotherhood; yet it's apparent in all examples, that the miniſtry of this conſtitution are held, if not in proper ſpeaking; yet in conſcience, and religious courteſie, as though all power were inveſted in them; or at leaſt to ſuch a degree that there is no appearance of what many render the government grevious to them, if they are but contented, to be the maſters of an aſſembly of free-men, and not of ſlaves. Amongſt abundance of illuſtrations I will mention two.

1. The great veneration in man's mind towards thoſe who are ſenſibly cloathed with authority. *If I am a father where it my honor, if a maſter where is my fear*, Mat. 1. 6. The prophet reaſons from the law of nature; there being ſuch a property planted in the ſoul by its maker to revere ſuperiors, and eſpecially men in public truſt. And alſo the authority ſhining in them, being ſuch bright rays both of the divine majeſty and benignity, there being ſuch a ſenſible good and benefit accruing thereby, to the reſt of mankind, hence ſprings a univerſal diſpoſition to obedience and ſubmiſſion, this is obvious through the whole civil miniſtry of the world; there is no need to make every judge in commiſſion, or chief magiſtrate a ſovereign prince to gain homage to him. No! but as ſoon as a man appears veſted with authority, there is that in the ſoul of another which teaches reverence and obedience to him in his truſt, both from the ſuggeſtions of fear and ſenſe of intereſt. So that a learned, painful and pious miniſtry intruſted with the ſouls and happineſs of men; and taking indefatigable care to ſecure eternal life for them, has a moſt charming and endearing aſpect and influence upon all the rational powers. In ſo much that nature itſelf has a high value for ſuch ſubjects of truſt. And as for grace its ready to be laviſh of its victims.---ye received me as an angel of God even as Chriſt Jeſus.-----If it had been poſſible ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me, *Gal.* 4. 14, 15. If any man doubts of the validity of this plea, let him but view what conqueſts have been made by the abuſe of theſe principles, and you will find the miniſtry of the chriſtian world have far exceeded *Cæſar*, in ſubduing mankind; for from an honeſt obedience they have brought them to lye down, &

be trampled on by their ſpiritual owners. That there is no danger on the poople's ſide when things are well ſtated, if there be but a wiſe and due management on the other. And ſtill it is more evident.

2. From the extent of commiſſion, with the many enobling prerogatives fixed in their truſt. Though they are the miniſtry, and but the miniſtry of a democracy, their commiſſion is ſo large, and high-prerogatives ſo numerous, they carry ſo great an appearance, as though in reality they were the ſubjects of all power. And I think it is ſo from the nature and modes of all regular government; for when a government has enacted their laws and precepts, and ſettled their miniſtry, they leave the ſway of things to them; that it is as tho' they had reſigned all the power to their miniſtry: So it is peculiarly in the affairs of goſpel churches. That let men at their leiſure view this illuſtration by the ſcripture, our platform, and by the laws and cuſtoms of nations, and they will find it a truth. That certainly a painful miniſtry may eaſily be reconciled to our conſtitution, unleſs they are raiſed to that temper of mind as he was, who had this for his motto, *Aut Cæſar aut Nihil.* A *Cæſar* or nothing.

Plea III.

From the near affinity our conſtitution holds with the civil governments of ſome of the moſt flouriſhing commonwealths in the world. It's certain, every ſpecies of government ſimple and mixt, have their various excellencies and defects; much may be ſaid in honor of each, and alſo every conſtitution may have ſomething wanting; at leaſt it may ſeem ſo, under a more critical ſurvey of its nature, principles, ill-conveniencies, corrupt miniſtry, misfortunes, &c. And many times a government falls under ſcandal from diſtemper of mind, from falſe ends and corrupt intereſts, which ſway and over-rule mens thoughts relating to government, more than from the conſtitution itſelf. But however, to evade all circular diſcourſes, we may very fairly infer, where we find nations flouriſhing, and their liberty and property, with the reſt of the great immunities of mans nature nouriſhed, ſecured, and beſt guarded from tyranny, we may venture to pronounce this people to be the ſubjects of a noble government, and there be many ſuch on earth, whoſe conſtitution will ſerve to juſtify ours. I ſhall inſtance in three, and no more.

1. The *Venetian* common-wealth; though some are pleased to call the government of this free state, an aristocracy; but it seems more properly a limited democracy; for that the seat of sovereign power is their ancient commons, called their families, enrolled in the golden book; these make up the grand council of the nations, settle the public ministry, and enact laws, &c. This people have by this mode of government raised themselves into so august and flourishing a capacity, that from a very obscure original, they are grown to that degree, as to bridle and curb the pride and haughtiness of Turk and Pope. This example must needs be no small honor to our constitution.

But,

2. The *Belgick* provinces are without interruption allowed to be the subjects of a formed democracy, they in some ages past being insulted, and unmercifully trampled upon by that august tyrant, the Spanish Monarch; they being his subjects broke loose from him, and set up for themselves. They assumed to themselves their original power, and when they had got it into their hands, had the wit, and kept it, and have improved it in the form of a democracy to this day, and God has blest them: That from the poor states of Holland, they are now grown to wear the splendid title of *Their High Mightinesses*, and are a match for most monarchs on earth. Says Gordon of their government: The seven provinces of Holland being under a democratical government, are as it were several common-wealths; each province being a distinct state; yea, and every city having an independent power within itself to judge of all causes, whether civil or criminal, and to inflict even capital punishments; but all joining together, make one republic, the most considerable in the world.

Query. Whether such examples of popular governments now extant on earth, and yielding such vast advantages to the subjects, and being so regular and practicable; I say, whether they may not justly deter all men from reproaching our constitution with the scandalous title of anarchy, unless they will allow us to prepare a chronicle for them, and therein publish to the world their profound ignorance of the several species of government; and the distinct way of placing and exercising various powers in them.

3. The English. This nation is reputed to be the sub-

jects of the fineſt and moſt incomparable government in the world. And this original happy form of government, is (ſays one) truly and properly called an Engliſh man's liberty: a privilege to be freed in perſon and eſtate from arbitrary violence and oppreſſion; and a greater inheritance than we derive from our parents. And this birth-right of Engliſh men ſhines moſt conſpiciouſly in two things.

1. In Parliaments; wherein the ſubject has by his repreſentatives, a ſhare in legiſlative power: And ſo makes his own laws, and diſpoſes of his own money.

2. In Jury's; whereby he has a ſhare in the executive part of law, ſo that no cauſes are tried, nor any man adjudged to loſe his life, member or eſtate, but upon the verdict of his peers; his equal or neighbours, and of his own condition. Theſe two grand pillars of Engliſh liberty, are the fundamental vital privileges whereby we have been, and are ſtill preſerved more free and happy, than any other people in the world; and we truſt ſhall ever continue ſo. For whoſoever ſhall deſign to impair, pervert, or undermine either of theſe, do ſtrike at the very conſtitution of our government, and ought to be proſecuted and puniſhed, with the utmoſt zeal and vigour.--------For to poyſon all the ſprings and rivers in the kingdom, could not be a greater miſchief; for this would only affect the preſent age, but the other would ruin and enſlave all our poſterity. I ſhall improve this example by three Queries.

Query 1. Ah! What's the matter with *Engliſh* men, men of ſuch courage to be ſurprized with ſuch fear, as tho' they were like to be taken captive, and turned into ſlaves in their own home? Why, in good truth, there may be a reaſon for it; therefore it becomes them to be very careful under this head; for if they make themſelves ſlaves in their own country, or let others do it for them, when they can prevent it, they both deny God who made and redeemed them, and plainly violate the law of nature?

Query. 2. Who is it Engliſh men are thus afraid of? Who do they thus reflect upon in their frights and fears? It is neither France nor the great Turk which dreads them! therefore it muſt needs be ſome body or another nearer home that threatens their liberty. And may not New-England's goſpel liberties deſerve ſo much fear and cau-

tion, although it ſhould ſo happen that ſome body ſhould be reflected upon by their cautiouſneſs.

Query. 3. If the ſettling ſuch immunities, as the privilege of parliaments and juries in the hands of the people be ſuch effectual barriers to preſerve a nation from tyranny and ſlavery; then whether when goſpel churches have the means in their own power, it been't their wiſdom to keep up the like barrier, or ſomething equivalent thereto; that they may preſerve themſelves ſafe from the arbitrary meaſures of their own miniſtry? or thus, whether for Engliſh men, when their liberties in church or ſtate are fait lockt up for them and their poſterity by law and regular ſettlements, it been't their beſt way to beware how they repeal thoſe laws, or weaken thoſe ſettlements?

But at preſent I ſhall leave it to other men to run the parrallel between our conſtitution, and the ſeveral governments I have mentioned, and infer what more they ſhall think proper; only leaving to myſelf the liberty to conclude, that the ſeveral examples of civil ſtates, which I have named, do ſerve abundantly to juſtify the noble nature of our conſtitution in church-order; for that the ſeveral famous and auguſt nations which I have mentioned, in all their glory at home, and ſucceſs in arms and trade abroad; their ſeveral governments which have brought them to all this, are either a perfect democracy, or very much mixed and blendiſhed with it.

Then why ſhould we in New-England be any more aſhamed, or leſs careful of our church-government, which keeps us from tyranny and ſlavery in the concerns of our conſciences, than thoſe nations are of their civil government, whereby they are preſerved from the like damnable circumſtances in the concerns of their outward life, and natural rights and fortunes?

Demonſtration V.

From the dignity which the providence of God has put upon the conſtitution, both in the firſt ages of the chriſtian churches and in the laſt century.

1. In the firſt ages of the chriſtian churches God has put many marks of diſtinguiſhing favour upon this conſtitution, both in the ſmiles and frowns of his providence.

1. In the ſmiles of providence upon the churches, whilſt they continued compleat in their conſtitution. I ſhall offer but three particulars to juſtify this obſervation.

1. In the great and admirable success of the gospel, in the conversion of so many nations.

2. In their singular purity, and virtuous deportment in the midst of a corrupt world. That (as Mr. Cotton observes) was a general eulogy belonging to their members, and ascribed to them by the wiser sort of heathen, *scil. Bonus vir, tantum Christianus*, He is a good man only is a christian.

3. They were eminently supported and carried on by the grace and providence of God through all their direful sufferings; the more they were wasted and destroyed, the more they grew and increased, as Israel in Egypt. Indeed whilst they remained firm to their constitution, they were not only like an army in banners, but in reality the greatest conquerors that ever appeared on earth. They merely baffled the bravery of the old Roman spirit, and were quite too hard for those who had vanquished the world. I have seen, says *Eusebius*, the executioner (tired with tormenting them) lye down panting and breathing, &c. But I never saw the martyrs weary of sufferings, nor heard them desire a truce: Nay, were rather ambitious of the longest and most terrible sufferings, that they might be martyrs in every member. Thus the churches endured hardness as good soldiers of Christ, thro' ten bloody persecutions; and at last retreated by divine providence, under the umbrage of the great *Constantine*. And there the churches of God made the finest show that ever was seen on earth, next to Christ in his transfiguration. Till this time the churches remained the subjects of their democratical government in some good measure though there were some symptoms of an alteration in the last century, but indeed after the churches were freed from the rage of heathen persecutors, there quickly followed the perfect subversion of their order.

So we come,

2. To consider the frowns of Providence that pursued the christian world after the subversion of their primitive constitution. Sufficient observations have been made under the foregoing demonstrations, setting forth the change of government which was made in the churches. And in short, it was really and properly the altering the ministry of a democracy into an aristocracy; for to speak plainly, the public officers to gratify their ambition, took all the power into their own hands, and settled all affairs and

concerns acccording to their own minds without controul. But let us eye the providence of God, and we may obſerve that God did ſoon ſtain the pride and glory of theſe men; eſpecially in two eminent inſtances of his diſpleaſure, which I ſhall only mention.

Inſtance. 1. In the fatal *Arian* hereſy, that ſpread it ſelf like ſome mortal contagion, thro' the chriſtian world? that it was ſaid the whole world was become an *Arian*. *Arius* was the author of this damnable doctrine, viz. That our Saviour Chriſt was neither God, nor eternal, but a creature; and that he aſſumed only the body, not the ſoul of man, &c. This damnable hereſy ſoon ſpread itſelf far and wide; the author was in the heighth of his wickedneſs, and fell a victim to divine vengeance in the latter part of *Conſtantine*'s reign: But his hereſy continued and prevailed, and eſpecially amongſt the clergy. But this is very awful to obſerve, that when theſe men by their wit and cunning had once cozened and cheated the fraternity of their ancient rights and prerogatives, God left the devil to cheat and deceive them, as wiſe and learned as they were, of their true religion and ſouls together. What good did all their ſlegerdemain to them now? Had not they better have kept holy and humble paſtors, confined to their parochial dioceſſes, and known and loved and preach't Chriſt the eternal Son of God, and him crucified, rather then ſtretcht their boundary like ſovereign princes, and ſo left to periſh under ſuch a dreadful diſpenſation, as the fruit of their ambition and infidelity?

To me (conſidering the commencement, the deadly nature, the rage, the univerſal prevalence and continuance of this damnable hereſy) it ſeems as though God had lookt down from heaven, and viewed the ſacrilegious robbery committed upon the churches with deteſtation. And therefore ſummonned a congreſs of the ſeveral ſtates of the other world. (1 Kings 22. 19. I ſaw the Lord ſitting on his throne) and iſſuing out proclamation.---Be it known! That never has a nobler cauſe been ſo baffled and ſacrilegiouſly betrayed by the dignified truſtees of it as this. I have been down amongſt my golden candleſticks, my famous churches; I find the fraternity drowſy and remiſs, ſetting too low a value on their ineſtimable rights. And thoſe who ſhould rowſe them from their ſecurity and incogitancy, rather eſteem it a lucky omen; and therefore

to satiate their own ambition (instead of advising, and directing the churches in the study of their constitution ; and so plead their cause for them) they consult how to defraud them, they wrest the scripture, darken all places which settle their titles, and to end all disputes threaten them Diotrephes like (3 *Joh.* 10.) with the secular power that is now on their side. That they have at last absolutely supplanted them, stript and taken away the rights belonging to the churches, and purchased at so dear a rate. That as though the Almighty should say, my patience is out ! And my justice has prepared a cup of confusion for them ; Who ! of all this convocation will go and hand it to them ? And there came forth several legions with an arch-devil at the head of them, and stood before the Lord, and said, we will go and persuade them ; and God said, you shall persuade them, and prevail also ; therefore go forth and do so, 1 Kings 22. 22. As though God should say, I have now in displeasure abandoned them to ruin ; they who should have had a zealous regard to my settlements and as one chief end of their ministry, should have sought the happiness of the people, and not their own ease, vain glory, pride and luxury ; now leave them exposed to obliterate the essentials of their faith, and so fall a sacrifice to divine fury. Go you malignant powers do your worst, the hedges are now down.

Instance 2. The universal apostacy that has followed the subversion of the old constitution. We may in some degree date Gods departure from his churches when they began to subvert the order of them, and so gradually withdrew, till he---at last left them to perish by whole ages together. It must not, indeed, be thought, or said, but that God had a remnant through many ages, who continued orthodox in faith, both in the ministry and brotherhood. But yet it is very obvious that christianity *Gradatim*, declined till all was swallowed up in a universal and direful apostacy, never sufficiently to be deplored ; neither fully expresst, unless we transcribe the volumns that contain it. I do account indeed that the destruction of the churches, in moral speaking, may be attributed immediately and nextly to other causes, as ignorance, pride, hypocrisy, &c. But remotely to the dissolution of the order of them. For that the constitution forenamed was adjusted by divine

wiſdom for preventing and remedying ſuch maladies as proved the ruin of the churches; that when the remedy was quite taken away, bad humours predominate, and ſymptoms of a deadly aſpect appear, and ſo death inevitably follows.

2. In the laſt century God has been very admirable in the works of providence, and has therein highly dignify-ed our conſtitution. And we want no other evidence under this head than the recognition of what God has done for theſe famous Engliſh colonies in North-America; who have all along diſtinguiſhed themſelves, from all the world, by their ſingular regard both to the faith and practice of the true religion. Now let any other conſtitution on earth but parrallel ours; in the eminent ſhines of providence and in religious effects, and we will reſign the whole cauſe. But whilſt then, we will go on and rejoice in the grace of God, that we in theſe countries, are by his good providence over us, the ſubjects of the moſt ancient, rational & noble conſtitution in church order that ever was, will be, or can be; whilſt the laws of nature and grace remain unrepeal'd. For that it is a conſtitution which infinite wiſdom hath authorized and founded in the law of nature; and his omniſcient providence has eminently honored, and dignified, both by the ſmiles and frowns of his countenance, through all the ages of the chriſtian world to this very morning. And though ſome of the reverend churches within this grand conſociation (who ſettled upon the ſame platform with us) have with two great a precipitation made a deſection from the conſtitution: Yet this is our comfort, that their alteration is not ſo firm, as the laws of the Mèdes and Perſians; for that thoſe who turned them off, may by the ſame power bring them on to their old baſis again. And let Chriſt pity, and help them. For certainly their preſent ſtate is portentous, from what may be obſerved from the proceedings of providence through the whole chriſtian Æra, unto this day.

The Concluſion.

I ſhall now conclude my whole eſſay, by annexing the joint teſtimony of thoſe eminent men, fathers in theſe churches, now in glory. viz. The reverend Mr. John

Higginſon, and the reverend Mr. William Hubbard. And the rather becauſe Mr. Hubbard did ſome time before his death, deſire to have their teſtimony re-printed, and live with ſome other book which it might properly accompany. I am well ſatisfied the foregoing ſubject is the moſt proper companion, their teſtimony could have light on, in its travels through the world: I therefore make bold to invite the ſaid teſtimony, to ſet out again with freſh courage, and improve its excellent language, together with former acceptance it found with the churches to ingratiate and beſpeak favor for this ſmall treatiſe, its new allie and fellow-traveller.

And let the holy churches (for whom theſe now appear in joint teſtimony to confirm their divine pedigree) flouriſh in their ſtrength, beauty and order, after this triumvirate ſhall ſink under the tyranny of moths, and human forgetfulneſs, and lye down in the houſe of oblivion; where I hope the enemies of the conſtitution will be gotten down before them, and there faſt buried in their own bones and duſt.

But leaſt any ſhould think it abſurd, that I here produce ſuch venerable authority in way of epilogue, which ſhould rather in honor have been placed in the front of this attempt. To this I reply, that in honor and prudence I chuſe here to place theſe worthies. For you muſt note; I am now retreating out of the field of battle, and I hope upon honorable terms too; and then the rear is the higheſt place in dignity; ſo that though they are bringers-up, its no diminution to them. And not only ſo, but out of prudent conduct; for though I preſume the enemy is fairly vanquiſhed, yet ſome forlorn party may rally, and to gratify their deſperate fortune may diſturb us, but I hope theſe valiant and wiſe commanders thus poſted, will ſecure our rear, beat back the enemy, and bring all off with triumph.

A

TESTIMONY

To the *order of the gospel*, in the churches of *New-England*: Left in the hands of the churches, by the two most aged ministers of the gospel, yet surviving in the country.

1. ABOVE seventy years have passed away, since one of us, and above sixty, since the other of us came into *New-England*, *and having obtained help from God, we continue to this day.*

We are therefore capable to make some comparison, between the condition of the churches, when they were first erected in this country, and the condition into which they are now fallen, and more falling every day.

But we wish, that in making this comparison, we had not cause to take the place, and the part of those old men, that saw the young men shouting aloud for joy, at the new temple, *Ezra.* 3. 12. Ancient men that had seen the first house; when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice.

2. We are under a daily expectation of our call to appear before our Lord Jesus Christ; and we have reason to be above all things concerned, that we may give up our account with joy unto him. That we may be the better able to do so, we judge it necessary for us to leave in the hands of the churches, a brief testimony, to the cause of God and his people in this land. And this the rather, because we are sensible that there is risen and rising among us, a number who not only forsake the right ways of the Lord, wherein these holy churches have walked, but also labour to carry away as many others with them as they can.

We are also informed, that many younger men of great worth, and hearty friends unto the church-state of the country, scarce know what interpretation to put upon it; but find it a sensible disadvantage unto them, that the elder men are so silent, and remiss upon the manifest occasions, that call aloud for us to open our mouth for the cause of churches that we should be loth to see laid into destruction.

3. We that saw the persons, who from four famous colo-

nies, assembled in the synod, that agreed on our platform of Church Discipline, cannot forget their excellent character. They were men of great renown in the nation, from whence the Laudian persecution exiled them; their learning, their holiness, their gravity, struck all men that knew them with admiration. They were Timothies in their houses, Chrysostomes in their pulpits, Augustines in their disputations. The prayers, the studies, the humble enquiries, with which they sought after the mind of God, were as likely to prosper as any mens upon earth. And the sufferings wherein they were confessors for the name and the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ, add unto the arguments which would perswade us, that our gracious Lord would reward and honor them, with communicating much of his truth unto them. The famous Brightman had foretold, *Clariorem lucem adhuc Solitudo dabit, &c.* God would yet reveal more of the true church-state unto some of his faithful servants, whom he would send into a wilderness, that he might there have communion with them. And it was eminently accomplished in what was done for and by the men of God, that first erected churches for him in this American wilderness.

We do therefore in the first place, earnestly testify, That if any who are given to change, do rise up to unhinge the well established churches in this land, it will be the duty and interest of the churches, to examine, whether the men of this trespass, are more prayerful, more watchful, more zealous, more patient, more heavenly, more universally conscientious, and harder students, and better scholars, and more willing to be informed and advised, than those great and good men, who left unto the churches what they now enjoy: If they be not so, it will be wisdom for the children to forbear pulling down with their own hands, the houses of God, which were built by their wiser fathers, until they have better satisfaction.

It is not yet forgot by some surviving ear-witnesses of it, that when the Synod had finished the Platform of Church Discipline, they did with an extraordinary elevation of soul and voice, then sing together, the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, in the fifteenth chapter of the revelation: God forbid, that in the loss of that holy Discipline, there should be here for occasion to sing about breaking down the carved work of

the houſes of God, with axes and hammers; or take up the eightieth pſalm for our lamentations.

4. It was a joy unto us, to ſee and read, a book which the reverend preſident of our college lately publiſhed, under the tittle of 'The order of the goſpel profeſſed and practiſed by the churches of Chriſt in *New-England*:' A book moſt highly needful, and uſeful, and ſeaſonable; a moſt elaborate and well compoſed work, and well ſuited unto thoſe two worthy deſigns; 1ſt. the maintaining the congregational-church-diſcipline; and 2dly, the maintaining the ſweet ſpirit of charity and communion towards reforming preſbyterians, who are our united brethren. But we muſt here withal teſtify, that in that worthy book, there is nothing obtruded upon the churches, but what they who were here, capable of obſerving what was done fixty years ago, do know to have been profeſſed and practiſed in the churches of *New-England*; (except in one or two) then and ever ſince, until of late, ſome who were not then born, have ſuggeſted otherwiſe. Yea, tis well known, that the churches then publickly maintained thoſe principles, in ſeveral judicious diſcourſes, which were never confuted by any men whatever, unto this preſent time. And we do therefore moſt heartily commend that book, of the order of the goſpel, unto the peruſal and acceptance of the churches of the Lord.

5. It was one of the ſongs (as the jewiſh maſters tell us) in the feat of the tabernacles, Bleſſed be our youth, which have not made our old men aſhamed. But alas, we that are old men muſt confeſs ourſelves aſhamed, when we ſee after what manner ſome of our youth, have expreſſed and behaved themſelves, and with what ſcoffs they have aſſaulted the order of the goſpel, in ſome things lately publiſhed, and ſcattered about the country: which have been ſo far from anſwering the arguments brought for our church order, that they have been by the wonderful providence of Chriſt, made uſeful to eſtabliſh the minds of ſerious chriſtians, in thoſe very points, which they ſee ſo weakly and ſo rudely oppoſed. We have taught our children in the catechiſm, called milk for babes, that there is to be a covenant of God in the churches, wherein they give up themſelves, firſt unto the Lord to be his people, and then to the elders and brethren of the churches to ſet forward the worſhip of God, and mutual edification. And

it cannot but be grievous unto us, as well as unto all serious christians, for my children of *New-England*, scornfully to vomit up their milk with scoffs upon that and other sacred actions in our churches, too horrible to be repeated.

If they take from us, one of the songs among the ancient Jews, they would however leave us room for one of the sighs uttered by a rabbi among them; the worst fruit which we eat in our youth, excelled the best which we now eat in our old age, for in our days the world is changed.

6. Concerning all sinful attempts to overturn the order of the gospel, hitherto upheld in the churches of New-England, and to spoil that glorious work of God, which we have seen him doing, with a series of remarkable providences, in erecting such congregational churches in these ends of the earth; we would now therefore bear our testimony, that they are doubtless displeasing to our Lord Jesus Christ, who walks in the midst of these golden candlesticks, and they will prove bitterness in the latter end.

And this we declare with the more concern upon our minds, because of an observation, so plain, that he that runs may read it.

It is too observable, that the power of godliness, is exceedingly decaying and expiring in the country; and one great point in the decay of the power of godliness, is mens growing weary of the congregational church-discipline, which is evidently calculated to maintain it.

If that church-discipline were more thoroughly and vigorously kept alive, even by those that make profession of it, it might be hoped, that the Lord would sanctify it, for the revival of all godliness in the land.

But if this church-discipline come to be given up, we think it our duty, to leave this warning with the churches, that probably the apostacy will not stop there: For the same spirit that will dispose the next generation to change their way, in one point, will dispose them to more, and more changes (even in doctrine and worship as well as in manners) until it may be feared, the candlestick will quickly be removed out of its place.

7. We do therefore humbly propose it, unto all the churches, as a great expedient, for the preservation of our church-state, that more prayer (even in whole days of pray-

er ſet apart for th t end) with other appointed means, may be uſed in the churches to obtain from the Lord, the out pourings of the ſpirit of grace on the riſing generation. If ſo rich a bleſſing were obtained, (and our heavenly father will g ve his holy ſ irit unto them that aſk it) and if the riſing generation might be a praying, pious, devout and regenerate generation, there will not be ſuch danger as now there is, of their eaſily giving away the precious legacy which their fathers (now beholding the face of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in glory,) left unto them, or of their doting upon innovations fatal to the order of the goſpel among us.

8. Now as aged Joſeph ſaid, I die, and God will ſurely viſit you: even ſo, we the unworthy ſervants of the Lord, whoſe age bids us every day look for death, and our call to that world, where to be is by far the beſt of all, do conclude with our prayers unto the Lord for theſe holy churches, that he would ſurely viſit them, and grant much of his gracious preſence and ſpirit in the midſt of them; and raiſe up from time to time, thoſe who may be happy inſtruments of bringing down the hearts of the parents into the children. The Lord bleſs theſe his churches, and keep them ſtedfaſt, both in the faith and in the order of the goſpel, and be with them, as he was with their fathers, and never leave them nor forſake them.

JOHN HIGGINSON.

WILLIAM HUBBARD.

POSTSCRIPT.

THAT our teſtimony to the old principles of New-England, may be the more diſtinctly apprehended, we recommend unto conſideration, three pages in the life of Mr. John Cotton, written by his grandſon, Mr. Cotton Mather. p. 33, 34, 35.

"Now that the world may know, the firſt principles of New-England, it muſt be known, that until the plat-

form of church-discipline, published by a Synod in the year 1648, next unto the Bible, which was the professed, no perpetual, and only directory of these churches, they had platform of their church government, more exact than their famous John Cotton's well known book of the keys; which book, endeavors to lay out, the just lines and bounds, of all church power, and so defines the matter; that as in the state, there is a dispersion of powers into several hands, which are to concur into all acts of common concernment; from whence arises the healthy constitution of a common-wealth: In like sort, he assigns the powers in the church, unto several subjects, wherein the united light of scripture, and of nature, have placed them with a very satisfactory distribution.'

"He asserts, That a presbyterated society of the faithful, hath within itself, a compleat power of self-reformation, or if you will, of self-preservation; and may within itself, manage its own choices of officers, and censures, of delinquents. Now a special statute-law of our Lord, having excepted women and children, from enjoying any part of this power, he finds only elders and brethren to be the constituent members, who may act in such a sacred corporation; the elders he finds the first subject entrusted with government; the brethren endowed with privilege, in so much that though the elders are to rule the church, and without them there can be no elections, admissions, or excommunications, and they have a negative upon the acts of the fraternity, as well as 'tis they only that have the power of authoritative preaching and administring the sacraments: Yet the brethren have such a liberty that without their consent, nothing of common concernment may be imposed upon them. Nevertheless, because particular churches of elders and brethren may abuse their powers, with manifold miscarriages, he asserts the necessary communion of churches in Synods, who have authority to determine, declare and enjoin, such things as may rectify the male-administrations, of any disorders, dissentions and confusions of the congregations which fall under their cognizance. But still so as to leave unto the particular churches themselves, the formal acts, which are to be done pursuant unto the advice of the council; upon

the ſcandalous and obſtinate refuſal whereof, the council may determine to withdraw communion from them, as from thoſe who will not be counſelled, againſt a notorious miſmanagement of the juriſdiction which the Lord Jeſus Chriſt has given them. This was the deſign of that judicious treatiſe, wherein was contained the ſubſtance of our church diſcipline; and whereof we have one remarkable thing to relate as we go along. That great perſon who afterwards proved one of the greateſt ſcholars, divines and writers in this age, then under prejudices of converſation, ſet himſelf to write a confutation of this very treatiſe, of the keys; but having made a conſiderable progreſs in his undertaking, ſuch was the ſtrength of this unanſwerable book, that inſtead of confuting it, it conquered him; and this book of the keys, was happily ſo bleſſed of God for the conveyance of congregational principles into the now opened mind of this learned man, that he not only wrote in defence of Mr. Cotton, but alſo expoſed himſelf to more than a little ſorrow and labour all his days, for the maintaining of thoſe principles. Upon which occaſion the words of the Doctor (Owen, in his review of the true nature of ſchiſm) are, this way of impartial examining all things by the word, and laying aſide all prejudicate reſpect unto perſons, or preſent traditions, is a courſe that I would admoniſh all to beware of, who would avoid the danger of being made (what they call) independants. Having ſaid thus much, of that book, all that we ſhall add concerning it, is, That the eminent Mr. Rutherford himſelf, in his treatiſe entitled, a ſurvey of the ſpiritual antichriſt, has theſe words, Mr. Cotton in his treatiſe of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, is well ſound in our way; if he had given ſome more power to aſſemblies, and in ſome leſſer points."

JOHN HIGGINSON.

WILLIAM HUBBARD.

THE CHURCHES QUARREL ESPOUSED:

OR, A REPLY

In Satyr, to certain Propoſals made, in Anſwer to this Queſtion,----------What further Steps are to be taken, that the Councils may have due Conſtitution and Efficacy in Supporting, Preſerving, and Well-Ordering the Intereſt of the CHURCHES in the Country?

BY

JOHN WISE, A. M.

Paſtor to a CHURCH in IPSWICH.

Wherefore rebuke them ſharply, that they may be ſound in the faith. TIT. I. xiii.

Abjiciendus Pudor, Quoties urget Neceſſitas.

BOSTON:

Printed and Sold by JOHN BOYLES, in Marlboro'-Street,

MDCCLXI.

GLOCESTER, *March* 25, 1715.

Reverend Sir,

WE have had the favor and satisfaction of reading, and according to our measure considering the the transcendent logic, as well as grammar and rhetoric, of your Reply to the Proposals; by which our eyes are opened to see much more than ever before we saw, of the value and glory of our invaded privileges, and are of opinion, that if your consent may be obtained to a new edition, it may be of wonderful service to our churches, if GOD shall please to go forth with it. However, it will be a testimony that all our watchmen were not asleep, nor the camp of CHRIST surprized and taken, before they had warning.

We are, Reverend Sir,

Full of dutiful respect and gratitude,

Your Sons and Servants,

SAMUEL MOODEY.

JOHN WHITE.

QUESTION AND PROPOSALS.

QUESTION.

WHAT further steps are to be taken, that the councils may have due constitution and efficacy in supporting, preserving and well ordering the interest of the churches in the country?

1st part, it was proposed,

1st, That the ministers of the country form themselves into associations, that may meet at proper times to consider such things as may properly lie before them, relateing to their own faithfulness towards each other, and the common interest of the churches; and that each of those associations have a moderator for a certain time, who shall continue til' another be chosen, who may call them together upon emergencies.

In these associations,

2dly, That questions and cases of importance, either provided by themselves, or by others presented unto them, should be upon due deliberation answered.

3dly, That advice be taken by the associated pastors from time to time, e'er they proceed to any action in their particular churches, which be likely to produce any imbroilments. That the associated pastors do carefully and lovingly treat each other with that watchfulness which may be of universal advantage; and that if any minister be accused to the association whereto he belongs, of scandal or heresy, the matter shall be there examined, and if the associated ministers find just accusation for it, they shall direct to the calling of the council, by whom such an offender is to be proceeded against.

4thly, That the candidates of the ministry undergo a due trial by some one or other of the associations, concerning their qualifications for the evangelical ministry; and that no particular pastor or congregation employ any one in occasional preaching who has not been recommended by a testimonial under the hands of some association.

5thly, That they should together be consulted by bereaved churches, to recommend to them such persons as

may be fit to be employed amongst them for present supply, from whom they may in due time proceed to chuse a pastor.

6thly, That hereunto may be referred the direction of proceeding in any of their particular churches, about the convening of councils that shall be thought necessary, for the welfare of the churches.

7thly, That the several associations in the country, maintain a due correspondence with one another, that so the state of religion may be the better known and secured in all the churches, and particularly it is thought necessary to the well-being of these churches, that all the associations of the country meet together by their respective delegates once in a year.

8thly, And finally, That ministers disposed to associate, endeavour in the most efficacious manner they can, to prevail with such ministers as unreasonably neglect such meetings with their brethren in their proper associations, that they would not expose themselves to the inconveniencies that such neglects cannot but be attended withal.

Second part, It is proposed,

1st. That these associated pastors, with a proper number of delegates from their several churches, be formed into a standing or stated council, which shall consult, advise and determine all affairs that shall be proper matter for the consideration of an ecclesiastical council within their respective limits, except always, the cases are such as the associated pastors judge more convenient to fall under the cognizance of some other council.

2dly, That to this end these associated pastors, with their respective churches, shall consociate and combine according to what has been by the synods of these churches recommended, that they act as consociated churches in all holy watchfulness and helpfulness towards each other; and that each church choose and depute one or more to attend their pastor, as members of the council in their stated sessions, or occasionally, as emergencies shall call for.

3dly, That these messengers from the several consociated churches shall be chosen once a year at the least.

4thly, It is propounded, as that which from our beginning has been recommended, that the churches thus consociated for these purposes, have a stated time to meet in their council, and once in a year seems little enough, that

they may enquire into the condition of the churches, and advise such things as may be for the advantage of our holy religion. But the more particular time is best left to the determination of each respective association.

5thly, That the associations shall direct when there is occasion for this council to convene, on any emergency, and shall direct whether the whole, or only a certain number of these consociated pastors and churches shall convene on such occasions.

6thly, It appears agreable to the present condition of our churches, and from our beginnings acknowledged, that no act of the councils are to be reckoned as concluded and decisive, for which there has not been the concurrence of the major part of the pastors therein concerned.

7thly, The determinations of the councils thus provided, for the necessities of the churches are to be looked upon as final and decisive, except agrieved churches and pastors, have weighty reasons to the contrary, in which cases there should be provision for a further hearing; and it seems proper that the council convened on this occasion, should consist of such pastors as may be more for number than the former, and they should be such, as shall be directed to, and convened for this purpose by the ministers of an association, near to that whereto these of the former council belonged, unto which the agrieved should accordingly apply themselves, and in this way expect a final issue?

8thly, If a particular church will not be reclaimed by council from such gross disorders as plainly hurt the common interest of christianity, and are not meer tolerable differences in opinion, but are plain sins against the command and kingdom of our Lord Jesu. Christ, the council is to declare that church no longer fit for communion with the churches of the faithful; and the churches represented in the council, are to approve, confirm and ratify the sentence, and withdraw from the communion of the church that would not be healed: Nevertheless, if any members of the disorderly church, do not justify their disorders, but suitably testify against them, these are still to be received to the wonted communion by the churches; and if after due waiting, the church be not recovered, they may (upon advice) be actually taken in as members of some other church in the vicinity.

These propofals were aſſented to by the delegates of the aſſociation, met according to former agreement, at *B.----September* 13th. 1705. To be commended to the ſeveral aſſociated miniſters in the ſeveral parts of the country, to be duly conſidered, that ſo, what may be judged for the ſervice of our great Lord, and his holy churches, may be further proceeded in.

At an aſſociation-meeting, the foregoing propoſals were read and aſſented to, &c. Preſent,

Nov. 5. 1705.

THE

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Fraternity of the Churches in the *New-England* Colonies.

Truly honorable, and beloved in Chriſt,

IT is not from any diſreſpect, or for want of honor to the reverend elderſhip and paſtors of your ſeveral communities, that I apply myſelf more immediately and thus abruptly to your ſelves in this dedication. But for that it ſeems moſt agreable with my preſent provence. The privileges of the fraternity being ſo peculiarly the theme and ſubject of my pains, I eſteem it very proper to introduce my following eſſays, with a few words of advice more directly to yourſelves if you may be thence moved and encouraged to aſſiſt for the ſupport of Chriſt's and your own intereſts. I deſire to be without offence to any, and pray that all ſuch worthy perſons, wiſe and faithful paſtors in theſe churches (who are as much obliged by their office to ſtand by and defend the eſtabliſhed intereſt and rights of them as I am, and far more capable) will interpret my whole action in the moſt favorable ſenſe. And tho' I have not with the noble *Curtius* leapt into a chaſm made in the forum; yet I have ventured to ſtep into the gap, to keep the breach, till better hands come up, for the ſervice of

my country, and in defence of their sacred liberties; so that I hope many of you will come in with a new supply and recruit of courage and argument, when and where mine fails; and for the present I presume none of you will be offended, tho' I do thus immediately address the churches over which you preside, with the following principles of their interest and duty wrapped up in each other.

Then, *Honorable Brethren!*

1st. In general, my advice is to you, that in good order, and with all gracefulness which becomes wise men, you will with zeal, courage and faithfulness, stand in the defence of, and maintain your church liberties; God certainly obliges you to do it, with all the discretion and bravery of spirit, which becomes free men, in withstanding vassalage or a servile state, Gal. 5. 1, 13. Stand fast therefore in the liberties, wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not intangled again with the yoke of bondage: The plea is as forcible against a christian, as a Jewish Thraldom. For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty. I must acknowledge I have no particular prejudice against any of the governments of christian protestant churches in the world, so as to defraud or dispossess any of them of heaven; or monopolize so great a royalty to our own; but yet I am of this opinion, considering the just title of the crown, the churches, the people, the capacity of soil and climate together, that the constitution and way of New-England churches cannot be mended by exchange.

Briefly, To instance in the civil part; or interest of the crown, I think it very easy to evince, by the precepts both of religion and policy, that the parliament (that wise and august council of the nation) could not have invented an establishment in church order, more for the service of the imperial crown of the British empire than our present constitution, especially in such a country and climate as this is.

I shall not now any ways enter upon the question, but only give just a short hint, as to the revenue. Our present constitution does indeed, somewhat more than sip; it takes an honest healthful draught at natures fountains, but leaves the flowing streams for empire to sit at, [illegible] with safety.

The eccleſiaſticks in ſome kingdoms in Europe are ready not only to chide with crowned heads, but to take them by the throat, and wring out of their hands, if not almoſt a moiety, yet a vaſt ſhare of the golden fleeces that ſhould ſupply the public treaſuries, and cloath the nakedneſs of the kingdoms, and the people have no more wit but to juſtify and defend them in their claims and oppreſſions, and that till they themſelves (in great numbers) are as thin and ragged as penury itſelf; for by their rules of adjuſtment, when the church hath gotten an unconſcionable ſhare, then the crown or ſubject muſt be almoſt ſtarved; for there is not left a ſufficient and plentiful ſupply for both.

But now our New-England conſtitution is very fair-mannered; for when its ſits down to the ſtalled ox (made ready) it carves temperately and (without much defacing) leaves the whole to the empire to make its armies and navies, with the reſt of its needful and unwearied ſervants welcome. That in loyalty to your prince, and for the ſupport of the royal revenue, you may juſtly preſerve your freedoms.

Let us alſo conſider the beſt good of a whole people. It is moſt certain, true grace is the one thing needful, and the main concern for the improvement of the powers both of prince, noble and peaſant, and tho' grace be of that nature that it will grow (after a faſhion and in ſome ſort of ſoil) almoſt under any government; yet it is moſt agreable with laws of piety and wiſdom (for the good of all in general) to chuſe and ſecure that conſtitution and form of government that is moſt agreable, and which moſt naturally breeds it, and in greateſt plenty.

By the ſuffrage of our nation, that government which ſenſibly clogs tyranny, and preſerves the ſubject free from ſlavery, under the ambition of men of great fortune and truſt, is the only government in the ſtate to advance mens temporal happineſs; and we in this country honor the reſolve in civil affairs, and alſo affirm (upon great experience) that ſuch a conſtitution in church government is (alſo) the only way to advance grace and mans eternal happineſs; and we are the more ratifyed in our opinion, for that the experiment has on the other hand been tried, with a witneſs, in almoſt all kingdoms of the chriſtian world, and that firſt, by diſſeiſing the fraternity of all in-

tereſt in church government, only they have had the liberty to be governed with a hook in their noiſe (like wild cattle in a ſtring) by the mercy and pleaſures of their drivers; but as for any ſhare in the exerciſe of government, they have had no more, than the horſes in the royal ſtables, for that their ſpiritual owners having ſeized all the keys of church power, they profeſs no dividend ſhall be made, and alſo they themſelves being uncontrolable by any, and unaccountable to any, unleſs it be to Chriſt himſelf, as they pretend: Though I believe, thouſands of them never expect to meet with him, nor think that he ever will audit any accompts of theirs.

But however, for the comfort and glory of the preſent life, the whole government of the ſpiritual kingdom, in all its branches, and with its immenſe profits, has been eſtabliſhed theirs. But this ſort of diſcipline, hath ſunk great part of the chriſtian world, as many times over, as ages have paſt, ſince it hath been inſtalled univerſal rector, and where it hath kept abſolute poſſeſſion of the throne.

And muſt the waves and preſent currents ſit and w-ft theſe churches, towards thoſe rocks and ſhipwrecks, whilſt we have ſuch good hands and pilots an board? God forbid!

Therefore let theſe churches and the noble fraternity of them, ſtand their ground, keep faſt hold of what you have got, Rev. 3. 11. Hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no man take thy crown.

Hold your hold brethren! *Et validis incumbite Remis*, pull up well upon your oars, you have a rich cargo, and I hope we ſhall eſcape ſhipwreck; for according to the lateſt obſervation, if we are not within ſight, yet we are not far from harbour; and though the noiſe of great breakers which we hear, imports hazard, yet I hope day-light, and good piloting will ſecure all.

More particularly I aſk your patience with liberty (ſtill for your ſervice) to make the few following diſtinct petitions.

I. PETITION.

Honorable brethren!

THAT you would know what you are, and who you are, in the more ample and heroic ſenſe of your ſtate!

It is certainly very agreable with grace, for the upright,

fometimes to fhift ideas, and change fuch as are mournful, for thofe which bear a bright afpect in their condition; otherways they may rob God of the glory of the beft part of his grace and bounty, and difmable their own ftrength, for fome of the moft important fervices they are called to in the world; therefore Nehemiah plucks up his courage, and fays, "Should fuch a man as I flee?" As tho' he fhould fay, he knew himfelf owner of too many great endowments and inftruments, to be fo little as to run for it, or be dreaded with fuch an alarm, Neh. 6. 11, 12.

So brethren, imagine yourfelves to be fomething more than ordinary; for really you be fo; and that as you are a gofpel combination, and collectively conftdered.

What! the beft men of our country who form our courts, and command our armies, that make the figure and caft the true luftre (by their great wifdom and real accomplifhments) in all great fhews and appearances: Muft all thefe be made null, or buried in a mufis (as is frequently enacted by ambition) for the fake of fome inferior members in a fraternity? which is as much as to fay, in ftate affairs, becaufe coblers ftalls or orange fellers baskets, afford no ftates-men, ergo, none to be found; or becaufe that in many great counties there may chance to be an hundred knaves, and twice the number of fools, ergo, there be no *legales homines*, lawful men, fit for juries; no men fit for burgeffes or knights of the fhire, to be found to make parliament men? and fo the kingdom muft needs loofe all its ancient rights by default. And whether or no fuch obfervations as thefe, that are fo very conclufive, as you fee, may ftand for better law and logic in the churches than in the empire?

But of equal force in each conftitution, then, whether this is not the way to inter and bury the glory of the empire and churches in their own rubbifh, whilft we incapacitate the heroes of both by an argument a *minoriad majus*, viz. by infering the infufficiency of the great and wife becaufe of the mean and bafe mingled in the fame communities.

II. PETITION.

THAT you will put fuch an eftimation and value on your church liberties as the Engliih do on their civil. And this is but a very reafonable requeft if you confider the differing meafures under cuftody, viz. In-

mortal souls on the one hand, and outward fortunes on the other.

Many of you know the stories (possibly better than I can recite them) which tell us, what ship loads of blood and treasure those civil things have cost the English world; and how near they still lie to Englishmens hearts. And many of you being immediate successors, cannot but be very sensible what these New-England liberties have cost your progenitors, some of them having buried their estates, and all of them their bones in these foundations, and left you now in possession, that if you should put contempt upon their adventures, their courage, wisdom, zeal and self-denial, by under-prizing these inestimable infranchizments, and slight them as though they were now to be indorst by your own hands with Hezekiah's Nehustan, God may then put you to learn the worth of them at that school where they learnt it; and I am sure you will pay dear for your tutoring if it comes to that.

III. PETITION.

Honor and oblige your pastors and public ministry.

IT is certain they are very great articles in the reasons of your well being, Mat. 5. 13, 14. They make all things more savory, and to go down with a better relish; yea, they alter tragedies and comedies into a more grateful entertainment. What is all the glory in the world without the gospel purely dispens'd, and its most refined influence? These are the lights of the world, and carry the lanthorn aloft in the dark night of your travels, thro' the tempestuous ocean of a miserable life, to direct all to a safe landing at last.

Indeed, I must acknowledge, your ministers, when sound and faithful, are to be accounted and esteemed amongst the best of your friends, tho' when corrupt and prejudiced, the worst of your enemies.

I think the devil himself, and the world of his accomplices, can't do you the damage, they may upon a revolt, That I beg you will be curious and careful of your interest embarked and deposited there.

And without making any scruple (in the main) they are your hearty and faithful servants. Endeavor to increase their love, and let them see and feel you have a double honor for them for their works sake. And if after all

your repeated grace and goodneſs, they will deſert and betray you, they ſhall then incur a double guilt both by tranſgreſſing the laws of gratitude to you and of loyalty to their great Lord.

And I aſſure you, Sirs, I ſhould upon ſuch terms be very loath to ſhare in their triumphs, tho' their gains ſhould be ſeemingly great, and their ſignals and ſhouts equal with the Cæſars of the world in their going off.

IV. PETITION.

Furniſh your churches with ruling elders!

THE nature of the office is not only agreable with your frame, and exacted by your principles, but indeed carries ſafety and protection in it to your liberties: ſuch truſtees are not liable to corruption as other officers, in that you do as it were tranſmit and intruſt them with your very principles of ſelf-preſervation, which are of that nature as never to alter their ſentiments, unleſs it be in the diſſolution of the ſubject, when all falls together. The office ſeems a creation, where your juſt and regular ſympathies, and antipathies center by the laws of nature; that what you love, they love; what you hate, they hate; and being *ex officio*, of the ſtanding watch and guard, they will peculiarly perſonate your ſelves upon every notable criſis, and naturally caring for your affairs, will, like wakeful ſentinels curiouſly and with courage guard your liberties. Let churches which are numerous and fuller of eminent gifts, lead the way, and then excite and provoke their ſiſter churches to ſuch love and good works for the advance of the common cauſe. There are without doubt, in theſe churches, many private members, worthy perſons, ſuitably qualified for this office, who (like ſome edge-tools heedleſly left to ruſt out in oblivion) lie hid, yet, when found, and put to uſe, will prove themſelves truely eminent.

Let Chriſt's churches ſeek amongſt their neglected hoards; for they are, without doubt, church by church, far richer than they make for; there are, indeed, complaints of great poverty, and of a dearth and ſcarcity of ſuitable men. But I preſume it is done with great injuſtice; and complaints of this nature in theſe churches, are but the complaints of ſervants that are full fed; and relieve no caſe by complaining, but rather reflect diſhonour upon their

good master, who hath bought all and bestow'd enough, and also incur blame to themselves for not improving those talents for the advance of his exchequer, which they themselves have wrapt up in a napkin, and that in this case, by too much symbolizing with the carnal and politic men of the world, who to humour some by-ends (under the masquerade of indigent persons) make themselves very poor, tho' God has given them great riches, Prov. 13. 7. This is a true (tho' a serious affirmation) that in our constitution and principles, there is as plain a precept, if not as great a reason for this officer, as for any other in our churches; and yet, as to matter of fact, we find it to be *rara avis in terra*, like a black swan in the meadow; and tho' the whole species is not quite rooted out, yet it is grown very rare to find one individual.

Now the fault must be some-where, and I am satisfied, our poverty is least to blame.

That some body or another must needs be culpable, on the account of this great omission, may I without offence issue out, search and inquest, to know who is to blame, upon this failure, whether brethren, or public officers, or whole churches?

I. *Private Brethren.*

MAY not the blame be laid in some cases and in some churches, upon some very capable christian gentlemen, who tho' not incumbred (for the public) with any other incoherent service, yet are possibly too shy of this trust, when offered to them? It must needs be acknowledged, the office is almost perfectly a piece of mortification and self denial; there is no provision in it to feed ambition, or feast any other lust; all is full of watching and painfulness, and the reward and wages quite out of sight. But however in such examples, whether persons so qualified, and so called, ought not to comply, or themselves bear the blame.

The terms of Christ's kingdom are very strict and rigorous, for the honor of his own crown, when our just titles are competitors, and he lays the conditions of our obedience, upon a great forfeiture, if we don't submit, when called to duty, Matth. 10. 37, 39.

2. Public Officers.

MAY not the ordained officers in some cases and in some churches, be taxed or blamed, for this great omission? Such as out of timidity and distrust, jealous ruling elders, least they should instead of colleagues prove corrivals in the exercise of their own trust and authority, for being men not of such deep learning, yet may prove so fortifyed with friends, and so popular, as that they may be capable to over-top men of greater learning, and wiser principles of conduct in all administrations.

Now if any of Christ's churches, are vacated of this officer, by such jealousies as these, or of the like nature, can the officers be without blame? and if so, then whether the first born son may not justly imprecate future barrenness on his own mothers womb, for fear lest he should be supplanted of the inheritance, by the next son or brother born of the same ventre?

2dly, Such officers as may plead their own particular conscience and perswasion, against the office, as being of a doubtful original, or of an uncertain institution, and therefore make bold to over rule our plain precept for it and the church submits: whether is there not a great blame here?

It seems apparent by all rules of order and government, that this is too too sovereign in the one, and too servile and careless in the other.

For that no officer's particular conscience must be a rule to govern any particular church, contrary to the churches own law, or rule of establishment; For if it be, then the churches must have as many distinct charters, and differing books of canons, as their pastors have differing consciences; which is a plain in-let to all sorts of confusion.

3dly, Such officers who plead the custom of the churches, and so make the illegal omissions of some, a sanctuary for the same fault in others; but whether this plea from custom will hold officers exempt from blame, when weighed in a just ballance? Custom is justly allowed a great conqueror in the world, it subdues whole kingdoms to its empire, and all men submit and adhere to its demands and dictates, as to an oracle? But then it must be custom that is honorable, laudable, and uninterrupted, otherways

a cuſtom which continually croſſes a plain precept is very culpable, and contracts a long ſeries of guilt, and may expect to be purſued with a tedious train of ſad conſequences, altho' it ſhould with much preſumption wipe its mouth and ſay, I am innocent. Therefore cuſtom is no plea in this caſe, but rather renders all who depend upon it, to be reduced to a deſperate poſture in their thoughts and arguments; for tho' there is a cuſtomary omiſſion, that hath prevailed in the churches to a ſad degree, as to this office, yet the omiſſion has all along croſſed a precept, and has been confronted by the cuſtom of other churches in the land, who have attended their duty; ſo that thoſe churches who have maintained the practice, have kept lawful poſſeſſion of the right, and the title being matter of record, and founded in law, there remains no ſhelter here from cuſtom for delinquents.

4. Whether thoſe officers are juſtifiable, who honor the office, yet do honeſtly and uprightly think that the narrow extent of territory may (as to many churches) ſerve as a ſuperſedeas to the office? For what need of ſo many great commiſſions in ſo ſmall bodies? But whether ſmall churches have not great work belonging to them, ſufficient to improve a full compleat ſet of officers, and poſſibly, all little enough to do the work well, if the nature and extent of it be rightly conſidered and faithfully managed; for who is ſufficient for theſe things?

3. *The churches.*

WHETHER the churches, as incorporate bodies, are free from blame when they don't regularly endeavour to compleat themſelves in all offices, and proſecute their claim to this with effect?

The ruling elders are the churches privilege, and a very great right, on which their well-being and ſtability does much depend, and the great omiſſion in the country has probably brought things to that poſture of fickleneſs as we now find them at? Then whether the churches can be exempt from blame, when they ſuffer ſuch vacancies to continue, when it is in the power of their hands to remedy it?

Here indeed is a great queſtion commencing, viz.

Queſtion, Whether any church can poſſibly, and according to rules of order, proceed to elect ruling elders, when

other of their officers in actual rule and truſt, ſhall refuſe to call and guide the church in the choice ?

I ſhall indeed tranſgreſs the bounds of my own intentions, and the civility of an epiſtle, if I ſhould now undertake a full and compleat anſwer to this queſtion.

I ſhall therefore at preſent only juſt indix the principal titles or heads for anſwer, by pointing briefly at the duties of officers, and the prerogatives of the churches in the caſe.

1. It is moſt apparent through the whole miniſtry of the world (unleſs in abſolute monarchies) that it is the duty of all public officers, to miniſter according to the plain rules of the public ſtate, and not by their own fancy or wills, and ſo in this caſe, the chief ruling officer or officers (then in being) in point of conduct are obliged to lead the church in their opperation, according to the churches plain and ſettled principles, and not reluct becauſe their own perſwaſions do otherwiſe incline them ; It is now plainly too late for any officer to pretend conſcience againſt eſtabliſhed rules : This objection ſhould have been made before they had taken office. But now it is out of ſeaſon, for they were elected and ordained to govern the church, not by their own thoughts, as the rule, but by the churches canon, and that by their own conſent, when they took office. And moreover, this is moſt evident, that if ſuch powers which belong to the inſide of mens being, viz. their hearts, fancies, notions, judgments, imaginations or conſciences, call them by what names you pleaſe, or let the owners freely fix the titles (the odds is not great,) now if theſe are to be the rule of churches, then paſtors and ruling officers have (in their degree) as abſolute a dominion over the churches, as the great Turk has over his baſhaws, and other vaſſals.

But I hope none here will claim this dominion. And if not, then let paſtors and teachers do their duty in point of conduct (if the churches are not remiſs in theirs) and this great vacancy may be ſoon ſupplied, and there is alſo a relief for officers, if their juſt prerogatives are any ways toucht by the traverſe.

2dly, To confine the diſcourſe to this preſent example, and to ſhorten terms, for brevity's ſake, it muſt be granted that any particular officer ſenſible of his duty, that ſhall undertake to gratify and lead the church, in the election

and choice, &c. This makes the case very easy in point of conduct; yea, tho' other officers in the same church, if there be any, should either oppose or not act. For that any one ruling officer in a church, where they may be many of the same nature, he himself is vertually the whole college of officers in any office-act that he performs without them. As in civil affairs, a particular executor so far sustains the whole executorship, as that he can make a valid act in that ministry, though many others are joined with him in the same testament, and yet don't nor won't act with him, in this or that affair, tho' confirmed in their trust; which principal is founded in the nature of a joint tenancy in general, and in a joint trust in particular, held by many equals.

3dly, The case is very difficult when the standing officers join as one man, and will not guide the church in these elections referred to, &c. And I must needs say, I fear here has been the great bar to this office.

We may from interest, as well as duty, rationally suppose the inclinations of the churches, and the desires of many of them have been made known by repeated and honorable solicitations therein, saying to Archipus, fulfil thy ministry, Cor. 4. 17. And we may also affirm, the principle is plain, the office is acknowledged, at home and abroad to be of divine original. But however this is certain it is a formal establishment by these churches, and not now to be disputed. Yet the officers pretend, they see no reason to give way to the churches desire or demands, neither will they conduct in this case, though their duty does oblige, that so the church may be compleated in its officers; no! they are pleased by acts of a superintending power, to lock the church door, and turn the key against this office, and no pleas or perswasions can alter their resolutions. But hereby the officers do plainly abdicate their office, by changing the acts of a limited trust, bounded by precept into what is meerly arbitrary; so in a degree, they break up the relation between themselves and the church, and by such an essential error, so contrary to the churches charter, and their own commission they forfeit all at once, tho' lenity and mercy may favor them with a long life; yet in the eye of justice they are dead men, if not in nature, yet in law, and upon their OBSTINACY may justly be DEGRADED, therefore in such a case when it comes to

that extremity, the churches may and ought to call in council, and proceed in their work and duty for their own well being, after the manner of an inorganic church, platform, chap. 10. And this I need not ſtand to deſcribe, our platform, the laws of the province, and the practice of the churches in other caſes, and vacancies will do it.

Then whether theſe congregational churches thro' theſe provinces may not juſtly reflect blame upon themſelves, for too ſupine negligent a frame of ſpirit, towards ſo great an intereſt, and ſo noble an office, ſeeing they have ſuch a ſhare in government, and can fairly reſque themſelves and their own rights, by the power and principles of their own eſſence, when their other officers neglect duty?

V. PETITION.

THAT you will pleaſe to reviſe the ſtudy, (and in order to it) a new impreſſion of your platform.

It is very uſual for many gentlemen in your country, landed men, and men of eſtates, every man to keep his law-book by him, as his bible, the bible for the ſolace of his mind, and the law-book for the ſafety of his eſtate, that upon any defamation of title, or other incroachments, when his lands and properties are in hazard, he may know whither to repair for his direction, and how to make his defence. And ſo methinks it ſhould be with the members of the churches as to their ſtated rights by their cannon law? That there ſhould be a kind of a penalty (if the hazard in ſuch a defect be not puniſhment enough) on ſuch delinquents, as live members of Chriſt's viſible kingdom here, and yet live without the platform, the eccleſiaſtical political charter of theſe churches.

I muſt needs ſay, and I wiſh I could whiſper it ſo low, that the eccho might never rebound to Gath or Aſkelon, and yet be diſtinctly heard through theſe churches, That I fear the impreſſion of the platform is almoſt extinct, if not quite worn out in the country. And that as it was ſaid in the day of battle, under king Saul, that there was neither ſword nor ſpear found in the hand of any of the people; ſo here, though your bible, which is the ſword of the ſpirit, is in every mans hand, yet poſſibly, this ſpear or neceſſary weapon, in the defence of your goſpel liberties, your platform is ſcarce to be found in the hands of one in a thouſand, thro' all the hoſt of Iſrael. I do therefore ad-

vise my country, and these churches, to furnish yourselves; and that you would encourage the printers in this design, and they can soon recruit you.

My honorable and dearest friends,

If we are push't on to battle, and our weapons are then in the oar, we may justly suspect we shall be but too easy and cheap a conquest for assailants. Therefore furnish yourselves in good time with this piece of artillery, that you may be well fix'd and equip't for service.

Don't you hear from the top of yonder proud and lofty mountain, the enemies trumpets, and their drums beating a preparative? Therefore let all the good soldiers of Christ be compleat in this and all other parts of their armour, and at an hours warning, unless you reckon your treasure not worth defending.

VI. PETITION.

WHETHER it may not be very proper for these churches, after so long an interval, to admit of this address, viz. That they will please to meet or represent themselves in a provincial or general synod?

That if there be any thing in our church government which may want emendation, that (as they say) it may be done, *Secundum usum patrum*, or regularly and according to the manner of these churches; or if there be any new forms, needful to be inserted, or whatever else may in a way of order be thought necessary for the advance of religion, it may be fairly decided for the service of the whole. And also, if it then shall be judged prudent, our principles for the seising, and trial of the more ungovernable, and flouter sort of delinquents and offenders, may be revised, and somewhat enlarged, that so it may be made very easy for all particular churches, to make out processe against them, and that they shall find the churches fetters will hold them. That forever after all small juncto's of men, or particular persons, member or members of the churches (let their character be what it may be) shall be deterred from being so hardy and bold as to divulge their pernicious doctrines, and seditious sentiments, with such presumption, and such hopes of impunity, as some of late have done.

Thus, *Right honorable and beloved in Christ!*

I have nothing more at present to add by way of petition.

to your selves, but only that you will please to take this poor piece of service in good part.

Bu tho' it be but as a little goats hair, or a badgers hide or two, or skins not well dresst, yet it may be some way useful for the tabernacle. And tho' it won't shelter against storms of great shot, it may serve to cover and shield from some slighter arrows.

But let it be what it may be in every other mans opinion, it is in mine (as to design and intention) my love, honor and loyalty to my God, prince and country, for whose service I was born, according to the received maxim, *Non soli nobis nati sumus.* And here I pay one part of my debt to those great creditors in such species as I have; therefore I hope for pardon from, and acceptance with all of them.

My conclusion is with devoutest application to the supream throne, that the almighty God will bless the great ANNE, our wise and protestant princess; New-England's royal nurse, and great benefactress, that she may live to see all the protestant churches thro' her vast empire, more virtuous and more united, and as they all meet and center with their differing perswasions, by their love and loyal actions in her person and government. Let her most excellent majesty, next to Christ, continue absolute in her empire over their hearts, and as she has made such a compleat conquest, of all differing parties within her dominions, by her wise and virtuous measures, and thereby won all the fame of rule and soverignity from her royal progenitors, who could never so charm such mighty nations. Let her reign continue the exactest model for all courts in Europe! and when she is full replet and satisfied with length of days, and the most glorious effects of a prosperous reign, let God favor her lasting and flourishing name with an unperishing monument, on which justice shall become obliged to inscribe this memento, viz. "Here lies in funeral pomp, the princess of the earth, the store-house of all enobling and princely perfections," That if all the monarchs on earth, have lost their excellencies, their *arcana imperii*, their state, wisdom, skill in government, and all sorts of heavenly, princely and heroick virtues; here they may be found lodged in this one unparralled MONARCH.

Let God bless his excellency, and preserve the govern-

ment of the province, and let it continue always in the hands of natives, and let our country, successively breed men of such merit, as shall always enamor imperial majesty, with their loyalty and worth; and that their true deserts may ever purchase for them such a high station, whilst they shall plainly out-weigh their rivals in the royal ballance. And let them be always patrons to these churches, as an acknowledgement to the crown of heaven, as the settled condition of tenure they hold by, and possess such royal demesnes.

Let the great and good God of heaven and earth bless these churches, the beauty of the wilderness, and continue so noble a ministry as they now have, and prosper and requite their faithful and unwearied labors, and let him continue the succession, and furnish the next set with greater accomplishments and virtue.

Let Christ Jesus, the great shepherd, who hath the care of the flocks in the wilderness, preserve inviolable, the inestimable privileges and liberties of these churches; and let them entail them, with all other civil and sacred rights and immunities which they now enjoy, as a sure estate of inheritance, to the last posterity of this people. And let their children, and childrens children remain from generation to generation, until the world be done with; and the sun has left shining.

So prays, the meanest of all your servants

in CHRIST,

JOHN WISE.

AN

ANSWER

To the foregoing

PROPOSALS.

THE nobleness of parentage, by the laws of honor, entails on posterity, (with other rights) a protection from all incivilities, but not from the austerer demands of justice, when that is affronted and violated. Justice keeping the golden rule, *Quo dat suum Cuique*) ob-

ſerves no other diſtinctions, than what it firſt makes in its diſtributions amongſt the rich and poor, the noble and ignoble, it is no reſpecter of perſons; for that it is ſuperior to all men, and ſits as a veiled empreſs, holding the ballance to weigh out equal to each one according to the merits of the cauſe, and ſees no man.

There being now under cognizance, ſuch as are of honorable families, and yet arreſted and brought by due courſe of law to anſwer for high crimes, it muſt not be ſuppoſed rudeneſs in manners, though they be ſomewhat freely and ruſhly handled whilſt the proſecution is held agreable with the impeachment and rule of juſtice. And as for myſelf, who am under commiſſion from authority, to appear in defence of my country's ſacred liberties: I can in my own juſtification, affirm, that I have no diſhonorable inclinations, but carry a juſt mind, ſo as to condemn no man or thing, but upon plain evidence, nor to aggravate any plea beyond its juſt bounds.

Therefore tho' in the following pages there may be diſcerned, a great liberty in argument, with a mixture of ſatyrs, as tho' none but my inferiors were involved in the charge; yet aſcribe it unto my love and veneration for ſo great an intereſt as I appear for, and not to any baſe intent of ſinking the honor, or darkening the luſtre of men. I neither deſire nor deſign to hurt any man, no, not ſo much as an hair on his head, but I ſolely aim at ERROR, that is the butt I level for.

Thus having by this brief, but ſincere apology, ſecured, the honor of my intentions, if I am worthy of belief; I ſhall no longer interrupt the proceſs, but ſhall nextly, draw up the indictment, upon which theſe propoſals are to paſs, and abide a trial.

And this I ſhall do in a form borrowed from ſir Edward Cooke, the King's attorney, in the arraignment of ſir Walter Rawleigh, in theſe words.

HERE is miſchief, miſchief in *Summo Gradu*; yea, exorbitant miſchief. This is the charge I offer to make good againſt the propoſals, at the bar of common reaſon; in order thereto, I ſhall proceed, and expect to produce ſufficient evidence under two heads.

1ſt. By a few preliminary queries.

2dly, By a more critical examination of the propoſals themſelves.

1. As introductory, and for the bringing in further evidence againſt the criminal propoſals, now upon their trial, I offer theſe following queries.

1ſt Query.

Whether the churches in New-England are not fairly in poſſeſſion of a form of government, by which they are diſtinguiſhed from moſt of the reformed churches in the world, more than by their grace? and if ſo, (which no man that knows them will deny,) then it muſt be ſome ſuperior power, or their own voluntary act, regularly obtained, that muſt out or diſpoſſeſs them. Did an equal claimer appear, yet long and quiet poſſeſſion holds againſt a writ of ejectment, a very ſtrong plea in the ſeſſions, both of reaſon and law; according to that acknowledged maxim, *in Æquali Jure, melior eſt Conditio Poſſidentis*, when two plead an equal right, he is in the beſt condition who is in poſſeſſion; then it can be no leſs than a very indiſputable right, and duly proſecuted with effect, that can diſpoſſeſs theſe churches of their government.

2d Query.

Whether length of time has diſcovered any eſſential error in the government of theſe churches?

And 1ſt, it has, or 2dly, it has not.

1. If time has made any ſuch diſcovery, yet the propoſals have not been ſo fair as to detect it, or deſcribe wherein, or in what reſpect. The great ſervice theſe churches, with their government, have done, in ſubduing and beautifying a wilderneſs, beſpeaks ſome conſiderable reſpect from all men, who value wiſdom or piety; that it muſt needs ſeem a harſh piece of juſtice, without any formal trial for them to be driven from plenty, and ſent to the doors of their own tenants, to beg for a booty, out of that eſtate which was once their own at leaſt, by a ſeiſin in fact, if not in law; for that the propoſals kill, and take poſſeſſion with far leſs ceremony or legal formalities, than Ahab did, in gaining the right of Naboth's vineyard; when as if there is any eſſential error in their frame or conſtitution, and that they have either ignorantly or treacherouſly aſſumed any peculiar prerogative which be-

longs to Christ's throne, as king, that was never their due to possess (and so being considered as usurpers, are dead in law) yet notwithstanding it would not have offended against the laws of gratitude in sending them to their graves, to have put some more marks of honor upon them, by certain solemn and usual forms of trial in the prologue of their dissolution; for they have been certainly great and good servants to the public, that if they deserve to die, they ought to die under all the marks of honor which justice can allow of, at the least a grand sessions, a jury, and liberty to make plea in their own defence, and under the influence of royal council, should have been granted; unless they may be treated as conquerors, serve unfortunate pirates, who when taken, are without form of law hung up at the yard-arm.

2dly. But if no such discovery can be made, whether it is a wise and just thing for men to alter their government? The churches of Christ in this country, have been in possession of this form of government; and it hath been established by certain legal and orderly familiarities, and universal consent; and has continued upwards of threescore years. And as the poet says, *Pervarios Casus Per Tot Discrimina Rerum Tendimus in Cælum*, They have passed various changes, and great temptations, and yet to this day by this besome of discipline have been kept as clean swept, as any churches of God in the world; and any such embroilments as have lately happened in the churches, have been more the folly of administrators, in not keeping to the rules of government, than from any defect in the constitution. Then what reason have we to meditate a change? No, certainly; it will be more divine and agreeable with the law of our religious gratitude, to join with the rev. Mr. Nicholas Noyse, in his doxology, or use of triumph and praise for the great mercies he recites in his election sermon, p. 79. says he, Thanks be to God and the king! our houses and our lands are our own, without every mans being at the cost of a charter; and yet we have the liberty of our religion, and the free exercise of it, without subscribing new articles of faith, worship or discipline; which is a great favor of God, if we have wisdom and grace to improve it rightly.

Query, Whether the right improvement will be to alter the scheme of our government or discipline, seeing no bo-

dy elſe will do it for us ? No ſurely ! But it will be more agreable, with both our policy and duty, to follow the good advice Mr. *Cotton Mather* leaves us in his golden-ſtreet, page 40, in theſe words, " Where we have a platform left us that is according to the word of our gracious Lord, and the pattern in the mount ; we ſhall be great enemies to ourſelves, if we do not keep to it."

3d Query.

Whether it be not great boldneſs for any particular gentlemen to invade, null, alter or weaken ſo great a right and property, as is the government of theſe churches, without their conſent ?

Government is the greateſt bleſſing in the world, of a worldly nature ; it is felony, cheaper by far to the loſers, to plunder men of their eſtate and wealth, nay, and of their lives too, then to diſpoil them of government ; for by the latter, you harraſs and worry them in the world, with plagues and miſeries, worſe than death itſelf, that the baſeſt is far better than no government ; a churliſh tyranny, is better than an inſolent anarchy, where men are without law, and all hail fellows, not well but badly met. And for men to alter or ſwap government, without all intereſted parties are agreed, is a very bold intruſion.

That, yea, that government which is in any good meaſure formed, and does agree with the natural freedom of human beings, and is adjuſted by the laws of wiſdom and honor, and plainly, and fairly eſtabliſhed ; is too much of God in the world, and too great a royalty belonging to men, for any to play the knave or fool with.

And when a government hath done all things in the main well, and has reapt in a great ſtock of bleſſings, now to ſhuffle it out of place, is fickleneſs, and not policy ; for a ſenſible ſeries of bleſſings will always atone for ſome ſeeming defects in a conſtitution. Therefore when all Iſrael met at Ramah, in a general aſſembly, to alter their conſular government, which had been crowned with ſignal bleſſings, they got ill will in the court of heaven for it, 1 Sam. 8. 7.

The great ſucceſs which attended, ſignified it to be a theocracy, and that it had more of God, than of man in it, which is an argument, *(Caeteris Paribus)* for all other governments, and ſo for this of New-England churches, which has been honored with great ſucceſs, and many

bleſſings from its beginnings to this day; therefore well does Mr. Cotton Mather deſcribe the ſubject and adviſe his country, in his late ſermon on the ſtreet of gold, ſays he, (in a remarkable paſſage out of a letter) page 40. "Here is a temple built, more glorious than Solomon's, not of dead ſtones, but living ſaints; which may tempt the greateſt queen of Sheba to come and ſee, and allure even kings from far to come and worſhip in. Therefore, as to their government, (ſays he) ſirs, do not ſpoil it, oh, deſtroy it not! there is a bleſſing in it."

4th Query.

Whether by comparing the propoſals and our platform, we don't find them repugnant, and ſo contradictory, that if one ſtands, the other muſt fall?

And that we can as ſoon reconcile a republic with an abſolute monarchy, or the beſt ſort of free ſtates with a politic tyranny, or at leaſt with an oligarchy, where the chief end of government is the inriching and greatneſs of its miniſters; and this we may do, when we have compounded theſe propoſals and our platform, ſo that as that faithful and noble friend to theſe churches, the famous and learned Increaſe Mather, D. D. in an appendix to his diſſertation concerning the ſacrament, laments ſeveral plots conſpiring the diſſolution of theſe famous churches, in theſe words, viz. The bold attempts which have of late been made to unhinge and overſet the congregational churches in New-England, by decrying their holy covenant, &c. We may here juſtly highten the complaint, and cry, *Pro Dolor! hinc Lachrimæ!* Alas, alas! here's the grief! hence flows our tears! for here is a bold attempt indeed, not only to deſpoil the houſe of ſome particular piece of furniture, but to throw it quite out at windows; not only to take away ſome of its ornaments, but to blow up its foundations. For theſe bold attempts which that WORTHY complains of, ſeem now to be grown very rampant; for here is in view a combination of workmen diſaffected with the faſhion of the old fabrick, who (in pretence) deſign to repair, but in reality to ruin the whole frame. They appear (indeed) ſomething in the manner of Nehemiah's men on the wall, Neh. 4. 17. As it were with a trowel in one hand, with which they now and then put on a little untempered mortar, to plaiſter over a chink or two, where the old work by length of time, is

somewhat weather-beaten, to pacify the jealousies of the inhabitants, that they may think these builders (surely) are mending, and not marring their old comfortable habitation. But in reality, they have in the other hand a formidable maul, not as Nehemiah's weapon to defend, but to break down the building; for they are all hands at work banging the platform in pieces, upon which the old fabrick is built. That may not the churches, and all their lovers sigh and complain, as once *Cicero* did, *O Tempora! O Mores!* who would have expected such times and such things from such men?

5th Query.

We must needs then enquire, from whence the proposals derive their force? Who gives them letters of attorney, or commission to sue these churches (by a *Quo Warranto*) out of possession of their government? To me (I must needs confess) the attempt is very daring; and I see no way of reconciliation, unless the scheme drawn in the proposals can be fairly sheltered under some more authentic and specious umbrage, than the bold dictates, tho' of the wisest of men, when they are pleased to set themselves up oracles for their country.

So I come,

2. To the more critical examination of the proposals themselves, which I shall attend,

1. More generally.

2. More particularly, by taking a survey of them in their distinct sections.

1. More generally, by enquiring into their original, and nature.

1. By making a more exact inquest and search after their original; and in this debate, they forfeit their essence, unless they can derive their pedigree, either,

1. From Gods immediate inspiration. Or,

2. From ancient revelation. Or,

3. From right reason, which is a ray of divine wisdom, instampt upon human nature. Or,

4. From the platform of the churches, which is a system of government, collected by our ancestors out of several fountains, and principally from the scriptures. Now in pursuing this distribution, I shall diligently enquire, whether we can hear of their original under any of these heads.

1. As to immediate inſpiration, I muſt needs preſume, theſe gentlemen will not dare to aſſert, that they are ſent immediately from God with this meſſage to the churches; they are too good and wiſe to pretend (with enthuſiaſts) to immediate viſion, or a ſpirit of prophecy; both the matter and manner of their writing, ſufficiently convinces, that theſe propoſals are their own ſentiments; they durſt not put, a, Thus ſaith the Lord upon them; ſuch an inſcription is too heavenly and royal for ſuch coin; for both they and we know, according to, Deut. 30. 12. It is not in heaven, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, who ſhall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may know it, and do it? There is no need to ſend meſſengers to that court, to learn by immediate and extraordinary information, either laws of our duty or intereſt; for that God hath made all things ſufficiently plain, by this time of day, either by ſcripture or reaſon, for the conduct and government of his churches; yea, of the ſubjects of his univerſal intellectual monarchy in this world.

2. As to ancient revelation; holy ſcripture, that beſt, tho' not the biggeſt of books, is the ſaint's library, and the clergy-man's pandects, whence he takes the rules for the management of his truſt: ſo that it is very amuſing, that the bible ſhould be forgotten in drawing up ſuch ſchemes as theſe; as, tho' the uſuage of the pope's conclave, which turns the bible out of doors for a wrangler, and gives the chief ſeat to tradition, &c. were here in faſhion. Indeed, I cannot but eſteem them very unfortunate propoſals, to be turned ſo naked into the world, as not to have the leaſt tincture of ſcripture to guard them from contempt; no, not ſo much as a citation, that might admit of ſo much as a ſtrained conſequence in their defence. And ſo, tho' leſs prophane, yet they are alſo leſs politic than the moſt deſperate of hereticks, who always bring their errors on the ſtage, guarded with ſcriptures, and craftily endeavour to make their citations look with ſuch an aſpect, as tho' they were encampt on their ſide. But here we have nothing for our faith to lean on, but ſo many auſterer *Ipſe Dixits*, as bitter pills of death for the churches to ſwallow, without any of the confection of heaven, or the ſweet manna ſprinkled upon them; or elſe only ſo many naked human preſumptions, as arrows or bolts, too raſhly ſhot out againſt the ſides of our churches, and no word of ſcripture

to tip or feather them. Nay, it is very memorable, and I account fatal, and to be observed that God, that sacred title of the almighty, with which the holy scripture does so abound, is not once named (as I can find) in the whole treatise; as tho' the most sacred titles, as well as sections of that heavenly book, would move fears, and irritate jealousies, rather than pour down solace and comfort upon this undertaking. Therefore, in a word, the whole bible is thrown by as a sealed parchment, or as one that never prophecies good to such adventurers. Therefore these propofals being apprehended as sea rovers, and indicted upon the statute of piracy; and upon examination being found without the prince of princes colours, and yet doing great mischief, in assaulting and wounding his churches and lawful subjects, on their honest occasion; being bound on a voyage to their own country, they can no ways in justice escape, but must pass under the sentence, and endure the pains of death, for they are taken fighting without commission.

3. As to REASON.

Recta Ratio, Right reason, that great oracle in human affairs, is the soul of man so formed and endowed by creation, with a certain sagacity or acumen (in many particular examples, sharpened by the constitution of nature by grace and study) whereby mans intellect is enabled to take up *(pro Modulo*, or in a degree) the true idea or preception things agreable with, and according to their natures. So that if we bring these propofals under examination by the laws of reason; we must enquire, whether they are agreable with the nature and constitution of the churches, if they fully harmonize with their principles of essence, then they may be enroled for canons; but if they jar, and are plainly repugnant, we may then lawfully censure them, and pronounce them irrational. Whether these churches are constituted by scripture or reason, yea or no, that is not our question, but being of such a frame or constitution, as they now are, and always have been; all who pretend to support and preserve them, and yet take such measures, as will utterly overthrow and dissolve them, such repairers have apparently deserted the dictates and government of right reason.

And here we may collect an induction of some few hints of certain particulars for evidence; the platform asserts a

claſſes to be no goſpel form of church order; the propoſals ſay it is; or they abuſe our credulity. The propoſals orders the aſſociation to have the firſt cognizance of church caſes; our government ſays, no, it belongs to the juriſdiction of particular churches. The propoſals gives power to the aſſociation to have the firſt cognizance of church caſes; our government ſays, no, it belongs to the juriſdiction of particular churches. The propoſals gives power to the aſſociation to limit elections, and to direct them; but our government ſays, no, it will not conſent; the election of officers is the prerogative of the churches, and they wont, as yet, part with it, &c. So that when we can by the rules of grammar, reſolve yea and nay, to be the ſame voice and word, then you may reconcile the propoſals and the platform; that certainly whatever there be of religion, the method is apparently diſagreable with common reaſon.

4. As to the PLATFORM.

I ſhall repreſent it by a kind of a ſhort proſopopa, thus, viz. enquiring whether the propoſals are reduced from this fountain, the platform with all its chapters, and with one joint conſent, as plain as the tongue in their heads can utter it, ſay, that ever ſince it poſſeſt the government, ſo much as dream'd of them. It may ſay with deſtruction, (Job 28. 22.) we have heard of the fame of theſe things, with our ears, but never imagined ſo much as a ſeminal virtue in our own being, for their procreation; but rather ſtarts with the news of their approach, out of fear of its own diſſolution, from their repugnant and formidable nature. Therefore as in a grievous fright from ſurprize, cries out with *Athaliah*, treaſon, treaſon! And begs that zeal and conſcience, thoſe two ſollicitors for the crown, will at this grand court of Oyer and Terminer, implead and proſecute them as traitors to the prince of peace, and felons to theſe churches, Chriſt's loyal ſubjects. So I come,

2. To enquire into the nature of theſe propoſals, by ſurveying their compoſition and properties.

1ſt. Their compoſition.

They ſeem a conjunction of almoſt all the church governments in the world, and the leaſt part is congregational. Indeed, at the firſt caſt of the eye, the ſcheme ſeems to be the ſpectre or ghoſt of preſbyterianiſm, or the government of the church by claſſes; yet if I don't miſtake, in inten-

tion there is something considerable of prelacy in it, only the distinct courts of bishops, with the steeples of the churches, tythes, surplice, and other ornaments, do not shew themselves so visible, as to be discerned at the first look, yet with a microscope you may easily discern them really to be there in *Embrio, et in Rerum natura*; For this is a known maxim, *Quod necessario subintellegitur non deest*. What is necessarily understood, or lies hid in the intention of a design, is really there, by a just interpretation; therefore these proposals which dare revolt so far at a step, as these have done, must needs understand no less in their aim, than an enobling government for clergy-men, which our princes and parliaments have adorned the churches with. This seems rational, that those which never stick at robbing the churches of such an immense treasure, as the proposals carry off, will never stand. Shall we! shall we! at the offer of a bishoprick, which is a barrony with all its rights, and royal appurtenances.

There is also something in it, which smells very strong of the infallible chair, to assume the power of making rules, to engross all principles of process, the right of election, the last appeal, the negative vote, and all superintending power in matters ecclesiastic, as the prerogatives of clergy-men, distinct from all other estates, and ministers in government; or thus, for the clergy to monopolize both the legislative and executive part of canon law, is but a few steps from the chair of universal pestilence, and by the ladder here set up, clergymen may, if they please, clamber thus high; for when they are invested with what is in these proposals provided and intended for them, who then can controul them, but the Almighty himself? as was said of those daring men, Gen. 11. 6. And now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do; for who can now with-hold from them infallibility, or stop the direful and definitive sentence? Who can limit their power, or shorten their arm in their executions? Their bulls can now upon any affront, bellow and thunder out a thousand terrible curses, and the poor affrighted and invassal'd laity, both princes and subjects (being here as in the grave, put under one and the same topick) must forfeit their salvation, if they don't tamely submit, and obediently become their executioners; for that it is now

evident, that all power is if not really given, yet formerly ſtolen, and in intent bequeathed to them.

2dly. Their properties.

1ſt Property, is Diſorder. Order is both the beauty and ſafety of the univerſe ; take away the decorum whereby the whole hangs together, the great frame of nature is unpin'd, and drops piece from piece ; and out of a beautiful ſtructure we have a chaos. Theſe propoſals are therefore very miſchievous, if not in matter, yet in the manner of production ; they are full of diſorder, being things born out of due time, their conception is without countenance, from the rule of order. Indeed, there is no ſtatute to be found that will juſtify the firſt coitus of the parents, neither will any allow their ſocial life ; that the birth muſt bear the attender, of being both begotten and born, out of lawful wedlock, and ſo in point of honor fall under the cenſure of the Levitical law, and muſt be kept back from promotion ; for, Deut. 32. " A baſtard ſhall not enter into the congregation."

That to paſs all other remarks, if we are under miſtake in the aſſertions ; I then demand and enquire, where is that lawful authority, which publiſhed legal banes, with the conſent of all the intereſted perſons, and the regular conſummation of the match ? If any rule can be found to ſhelter and honor the conception and birth, let it be produced ; and it eſcaping other felonies with life, this ſcandal ſhall be taken off, but otherwiſe it muſt remain as a bar to the tenth generation.

The 2d Property, is Uſurpation. The propoſals apparently uſurp the church prerogatives. It has been aſſerted, and it is true, theſe churches have been ſettled upon the platform of their own government for upwards of ſixty years ; they have often reviſed and re-inforc'd the eſtabliſhment, both as the principles of their conſociation and union in general, and the form of government, for every church in particular.----------Then for theſe propoſals without licence to aſſume a legiſlation, and form a government ſo repugnant to their own, can be no leſs than uſurping a dominion over them, contrary to the rule, 1. Pet. 5. 3. neither as being lords over God's heritage. Leſſer acts againſt empire, hath coſt many a bold man his head ; What ! for a particular knot or junćto of gentlemen to make ſo bold with a ſettled government, as to pick

out all the enobling royalties, liberties and enfranchizements in it, and sacrifice them to their own ambition! It is enough to put mankind into an uproar.

It is fresh in memory, that when some of our English princes (and one would think, if any men may, they may be allowed to aspire, yet when they) have presumed on less things than these propositals reach after, in gratifying their aim at an absolute monarchy, when as they have not dared to lay out with such freedom, a new form of government, with a wide mouth, gaping to devour the English liberties, (as these propositals do the churches,) but only with much secrecy, covin and policy, they have by some more clandestine measures, been intruding upon the ancient liberties of the English nation. Every one knows what direful convulsions this has bred in the bowels of the kingdom. And may it not serve to enliven this plea? To invite all such who are with *Plato*, owners of a great genius at inventing new, or modelling old government, to try their skill in altering the English monarchy, and see how it will be probated. That is, suppose you should venture to interdict the royal assent, or convert the present monarch into a duke of *Venice*, or dissolve the lords in parliament or (rather in harmony with this scheme) turn the burgesses and knights of the shires (as a sort of men not fit for politics in parliament) out of doors? And whether our sovereign, the peerage, or subjects of English liberties would take it well? And whether christian men may make bolder with the established government of Christ's churches, than with that which belongs to civil affairs? In honor to the *New-England* churches, and with veneration for the English monarchy, I dare assert, that there is in the constitution of our church government, more of the English civil government in it, and it has a better complexion to suit the true English spirit, than is in the English church, or any other, both as to the legislative and executive part of government. Indeed, considering how things are at home in church and state, I have been sometimes ready to query, why the nation should be so enamoured with their civil, and yet so careless and regardless of their gospel liberties, so as to trust their consciences, with their clergy, more immediately, and yet wont venture their estates with their learned judges, without the privilege and mediation of juries; as though they were more

careful and wise in securing their estates than their souls, and valued one far more than the other. But I shall go on with the comparison.

1. As to the legislation; our *New-England* convocation admits, and the government does profess the fraternity as necessary to the being of all synodical assemblies, that as far as legislation spiritual, is left to men, and as they have a great treasure, viz. their salvation embarked, so they have a great interest in the management of it; and herein they agree with the English caution and wisdom, in the modes of civil government of the empire; for the commons are one great estate in the civil legislation; and they have a great power in the management of that great trust.

2. As to administration, or the executive part of government, our *New-England* government grants a juridical power to the fraternity, and makes them proper judges in all ecclesiastical cases and administrations, on persons cognizable, or that must pass a trial juridice; which is agreable with the constitution, nature and practice of the civil government of the empire; for under the professions of law, no English subject in life, limb or estate, must be past upon, but by the judgment of his PEERS; yea, in all pleas of the crown, such confidence has the government put in the loyalty and discretion of the commons, that our English juries are stated arbitrators, and umpires between our prince and his subjects. Yea such a dependance has the whole nation in keeping these liberties in their own hands, that they reckon the commons in parliament, and juries in the common-wealth, to be the great pillars of English honor and liberties, and they esteem them as ramparts built by the wisdom of our ancestors to defend us from tyranny and slavery.

That considering the affinity in these two constitutions, one would be ready to query, whether the heroic true English spirit is not parent to both? Or whether they are not equal debtors to the gospel, for their original? The improvement of this comparison is briefly this; suppose some of the great ministers of state should venture to sweep away all those civil enfranchizements which are English-mens birth-right, and set up an arbitrary power, with a pretence of doing justice and judgment in the kingdom, by more concise and expedite measures, whether they might not be seized? And whether the statutes

would not be chains ſtrong enough to hold them, as traitors, to a well formed government, and then laid faſt by a mittimus for great uſurpers? And whether the plea will not hold in juſt proportions, on the other ſide of the compariſon?

3d Property, Riotous. The nature of a riot may (in part) be thus deſcribed; it is an unlawful aſſembly of more than three met in one place, to do an unlawful act, as violently breaking down of walls, and pulling up of hedges, and wrongfully entering into other men's rights and poſſeſſions, and that in affray and terror of the people. In managing this plea, I ſhall only deſire that the illegality of the aſſembly which formed theſe propoſals, with the objects and things they intend, and the ancient boundaries which they plainly invade, together with the fearful apprehenſions that many good and ſober people in the vicinage have concerning the enterprize, may be critically examined; and I doubt not but when we obtain the ſuffrage of this honorable court, it will determine the impleaded criminals are of a riotous nature, and ſo the indictment will ſtand more valid againſt them.

4th Property, Sacriligious, &c.

5th Property, Rebellious.

It grieves me to utter the epithits agreable with the nature of theſe propoſals; yet they muſt blame their own nature, but not my juſtice, if I give them but their due; for I find them in the breach of a royal ſtatute; yea, I think of a penal law. This is plain, they take away the liberties, privileges, diſcipline and government of theſe churches, all which are eſtabliſhed to them by the law; and that not only by their own canons, but by the laws of this province, as by a royal Magna Charta, viz. in an act for the ſettlement and ſupport of the miniſters, page 3, in theſe words, "The reſpective churches in the ſeveral towns within this province, ſhall at all times hereafter uſe, exerciſe and enjoy all their privileges and freedoms, reſpecting divine worſhip, church-order and diſcipline; and ſhall be encouraged in the peaceable and regular profeſſion and practice thereof."

This act (as one ſays on the great charter of Engliſh liberties) deſerves to be written in letters of gold, and hung up in all our houſes of God's public worſhip, to ſignify the zeal (in preſence of God, angels and men) of the au-

thority of the throne and empire, for the eſtabliſhing of theſe churches, and Chriſt's intereſt in them. Now, conſidering that the power, policy, and grace of the Engliſh crown, ſhould, thus lock up the churches treaſure for them, and ſet ſuch a centinal, with the flaming ſword of juſtice in its hand, to dread and awe intruders, it muſt needs be a very bold action, (if it been't plump rebellion) to attempt or deſign ſuch a ſequeſteration or imbezelment as the propoſals DO.

6th Property, Unfaithfulneſs, &c.

7th Property, Ingratitude.

For the ſtewards of great families, when advanced to honor, and a profitable truſt, by the free election and grace of noble-men, when their lords are laid down to reſt, and ſleep too ſecurely, or are gone out of town, with this preſumption, that their eſtate is ſecure, it being put under the care of loyal truſtees, and thankful ſervants; now for ſuch truſtees and ſtewards, upon ſuch opportunities to pocket up, or load away the riches of the family, and ſet up for themſelves, and leave the proprietors beggars, whom they found in wealth and plenty, is both infidelity and ingratitude. Now let the churches be pluck't and deplum'd as the propoſals intend, and they are after poſſeſſing a fair eſtate, become bankrupts: And let thoſe ſtewards that are guilty, anſwer for the robbery; for my part, I will have no ſhare in it.

8th Property, Impolicy.

And I am ſure there is great ſtore of this in theſe propoſals; I ſhall inſtance but in two particulars.

1. In timing the challenge that is here made, to brave a rich and powerful enemy at ſo great a diſtance, and invite him by ſound of trumpet to a pitch'd battle, when ſurprize and ambuſhments might be laid, and do the work with the expence but of a tenth part of the blood which this may coſt. This is not agreable with the art of war; Achitophel would have put a deriſion upon ſuch meaſures. Jacob's ſons when taking a bloody deſign in hand, firſt contrived to ſtupify and blunt the courage of their enemies, and then came upon them by ſurprize, e'er they could arm in their own defence, (though it does not juſtify their cruelty, yet it magnifies their ſubtilty) for thereby they bro't their deſign about; whenas if they had gone a more blunt

and daring way to work, Simon and Levi had not been half a breakfast for the Hivites. Gen. 34. 25.

So here, had the churches been convened, and no noise made of this design, they possibly (tho' their treasures are fortified by right, and so in safety, and their troops more, ten to one, than their enemies) yet by ambushments or surprize, they might have chanced to have been coakered or conquered out of all, by being flattered, over-awed, or over-argued, into a surrender or submission; but we may now rationally hope the alarm will rouze the whole camp, and each squadron will rebound it to the next with a *hinc Proximas Urit Ucalegon*; and so the plot may upon a defeat, blame its own bad conduct, more than its fortune.

2. The design itself (*Quo ad fluem Executionis*) let it come to birth, as is designed or desired, and the very heavens would either frown upon, or laugh at it for its folly: If we examine the climate of the country, the degrees of latitude, and the several stars that chiefly govern, there is no good policy in the design; so that, methinks the universal frame of nature cries it down for a *Non compos mentis*; for there are no such great creatures as are here conceived, can fare in hard cold countries as the *Camelion* does in warm, there must be a very great hoard to support them; and nature does honestly confess, she cannot answer the bills of fare, which belong to their table, and do her duty to the royal exchequer; and this must be maintained, or all breaks to pieces.

Again, let it be considered, whether it been't great intellectual weakness, or want of policy, for one generation to contrive needless loads for the next, especially when they may get as well to heaven, without carrying such packs along the road? It has been universally the humor of mankind, according to the laws of nations and nature, when roused by the regular dictates of self-love, to endeavor that every following generation might be more lightsome, free, noble and happy than that which did immediately precede.

They say the *Chinees* dig clay and use it not, but leave it heapt, or in pits, mellowing for the next age. Every prudent man builds his house for duration. The prince enlarges and betters his dominions. The peasant sweats to advance his estate, and then each leaves all in greater triumph to their heirs.

The *Kentish Yeomantry* are had in honor to this day, for

not stooping to the conqueror, till they had conditioned, and thereby secured their fair estates of lands in fee and free-holds for ever from all forfeiture by felony, according to their country proverb,

The father to the bough,
The son to the plough.

Such is the merciful fore-sight of mankind, and his charitable care and fore-cast for such as shall follow, tho' they may never be seen or known by their wise progenitors.

But here is plainly a conspiracy very heterogenious to such judicious acts of human providence; a design plainly, if not perfectly to enslave, yet to bring posterity into a needless vassalage and thraldom.

This is an acknowledged verity amongst wise statists, That that monarch who has the command of the seas, can at his pleasure command any maritime country. And so, those men who have the command and empire of the conscience of mankind, can command their estates, and indeed whatsoever else is grateful to them.

Then, whereabouts are we in our politics, when we have delivered up the royalties that are challenged? And in what a weak capacity shall we leave posterity in? Nay, these virtuoso's themselves seem to be hardened with the ostrich against their own natural issue, unless the thing would chance to spring up as quick as Jonas's goard, and hang as full of pearls and diamonds, as the seas, and rocks of *India*, and they themselves shall have the first shake, and fill all their coffers, with this harvest, or at least, that they are assured that they can and shall entail their offices as securely as their lands, upon their own children; as was the order of priesthood, and the fashion of the house of Levi. But alas! These modes are all worn out and made null; and such mens sons, as we are now treating of, fall in with the multitude, and must carry their equal share of the common load; that should the project prevail, under their management, (might they but look up out of their graves in about half an age) they may complain in elegy, after the manner of *Virgil* with his, *Sic vos non vobis hos ego versiculos feci, Tulit alter Honorem.* These verses I made, but another man carries away the honor. So these gentlemen might e'en say, we have contrived to greaten the clergy, and with bees have filled a rich hive; and built a fair nest well feathered, but our posterity we see, is

never the warmer, nor will they lick their fingers of it; and not only so, but are the men that must make up the tenth sheaf, and deliver the tenth cock, calf and lamb unto others out of poor demesnes. And also it may justly beget a mournful remembrance in posterity of their parents, and make them often look with a sad countenance upon their fathers graves, not because they are dead, but because they had not ended their days sooner, viz. before this scheme (so oppressive and cruel to their small freeholds) had taken effect under their management.

2. We come now according to engagement, to take a survey of the propofals in their distinct sections.

SECT. I.

THAT the ministers of the country form themselves into associations, that may meet at proper times to consider such things as may properly lie before them.

Answer. There is no doubt or question to be made, but that the ministers and pastors of Christ's churches may meet in greater or lesser numbers; for they are masters of themselves, and no more accountable how they spend their time, than other men are; but to meet at certain times & places, as political incorporate bodies, or in the form of classes, for the exercise and management of government, this must be determined by some precept issued from a legislative power; and without this, such who give the advice, and exhibit the call, are very dispotic and arbitrary; and those who attend it, are servile in their submission; for there is no man in his right wits will take this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was *Aaron*, Heb. 5. 4. The offer or invitation, bids defiance to our constitution; for our platform denies the classical state of the church under Christ, chap. 2. sect. 5. Therefore this is a daring article, in the criminals case; and as it strikes at the vitals of our government, it must in the TRIAL bear weight accordingly.

Sect. And that each of these associations have a moderator for a certain time, who shall continue till another be chosen, who may call them together upon emergencies.

Answer.

1st. What limits shall be assigned for the precincts of every distinct association? Or may we conclude the best model is to follow the civil distinctions made by the counties? And if so, then the pastors of each classes are scattered through a territory of twenty or thirty miles square, more or less, and then it must needs follow, that the moderator, to discharge his duty, provide messengers to cite all these distinct gentlemen upon any emergency; but the great difficulty is, what kind of messenger it must be, whether king *Solomon*'s tell-tale bird may be trusted with matters of such importance? Or, whether the moderator must re-imburse him? Or, must he go on his own cost, contrary to equity in that law? 1 Cor. 9. 7. Who goeth to warfare on his own charge? It is apparently an error, that care hath not been taken to find horse and man, and bating-places for both on this journey, otherwise for a legislative power to prescribe chargeable offices, and leave them destitute of a temporal support, they must of necessity die to save charges, or turn mendicants, or hope in their travel to meet with the prophet's juniper-tree; all which are as disagreeing with good reason as the proposal it self.

2. The moderator has an unlimited power during the prorogation of the assembly. (1.) He must judge of emergencies, that he may summon the members; and being left vested with such a prerogative, if after he has made his citation, he recants, he can then countermand his own order, though the gentlemen should be all mounted, and ready to move. (2.) If there chance to be an emergency of common concernment, if he finds his own favorites involved in the guilt and danger; he then gives no notice, but stifles the business, and so cheats the company. (3.) And upon any disgust, it is now at his mercy to null the whole frame; for he must be in place till another be chosen; and how will they get together, if he will not give the word? Unless they are creators of themselves the second time, as they were the first. That to institute such charitable designs without a fund, and tie such trust and dominion on the shoulders of men after such a lax and careless manner, and leave them at such loose ends, as easily to make fools of men; for my own part, I slight such methods in government.

SECT. II.

THAT queſtions and caſes of importance, either provided by themſelves, or by others preſented unto them, ſhould be upon due delibera ion anſwered.

Anſwer. I ſuppoſe there is no intent to erect a young or mock-royal ſociety, or that all queſtions and caſes of experimental philoſophy be admitted; if it ſhould be ſo, I think his ſome-what touches upon the prerogative of the crown, and may be called in queſtion, under the head of high miſdemeanors, if not *Pro Crimini læſæ Majeſtatis*; but howſoever, though there be no diſtinction made, yet we will take it in a more charitable ſenſe, and that the propoſal (in intent) is wholly confined to church matters; and if ſo, we muſt then inquire, how many deep queſtions can be found in our country, grown mouldy with the *Gibeonites* bread, for want of wiſe handling? Or can we find any ſuch heaps of gordian knots, as *Opprobria Theologorum*? The reproach of divines laid up againſt this conſiſtory meet, to untie them, that we muſt needs moleſt our old ſettlements for their ſolution? For my own part, I cannot comprehend the propoſal, unleſs it be a plot to introduce the enemy, that is in the reer, that is, by making ſhew of great illuminations, we may be dazeled with their luſtre, and thereby the more eaſily taken in the ſnare here laid. But however, to conclude, as the wiſe ſays of things more phyſical or artificial, *Eccle.* 1. So I may ſay of queſtions and caſes, there are none new under the ſun. They have been all well ſpoken to; every learned caſuiſt, is full of them, &c. And *Ames* and *Turrettinus*, &c. for a few ſhillings will do more in a month, for an inquiſitive mind, than this propoſal can do in the tedious apprenticeſhip of many years, then certainly, computing by rules of proportion, we can no ways expect that the clear gains ſhould countervail the great damage we ſhall ſuſtain by ſwapping governments upon theſe terms.

SECT. III.

THAT advice be taken by the aſſociated paſtors, from time to time, e'er they proceed to any action in their particular churches, which may be likely to produce any embroilments.

Anſwer. This is very diſhonorable, and alſo a very unreaſonable incroachment upon the officers and government of the churches.

It diveſts the officers of the free exerciſe of that office-authority, which God's word and our platform places in them; read Platform, chap. 10. ſect. 8, 9. Theſe are to feed and rule the churches, they are to receive the accuſations, and prepare them for the churches hearing. This ſection of the platform fixes both proceſs and judicature in particular paſtors and churches, without any limitation? But the propoſal allows no proceſs to be opened. till letters of licence be obtained, from the claſſes. But why may no. all other perſons in office be thus fettered, as well as paſtors of churches? Are theſe the only ſtudents of wiſdom and righteouſneſs, that are ſtrangers to the nature of actions, to the rule and application of it? All other officers, in truſt and commiſſion, who are wiſe and loyal, execute the hardeſt articles in their employ; and who may ſay to them, why do ye ſo? Our judges never ſtick to hang a man, ſo long as their commiſſions and the law will bear them out, and they themſelves are left, to be interpreters of both. And that this propoſal is a ſanctuary for officers againſt a ſtorm: alas! the moſt that we can make of it, is a covering of fig-leaves, and may ſerve for a harbour to cowards and fools, but not for men of ſpirit and conduct. The dream of an embroilment, can never counter-poize duty; if men are truſted with duty, they muſt conſult that, and not events. If men are placed at helm, to ſteer in all weather that blows, they muſt not be afraid of the waves, or a wet coat.

It is certain, it was no dimunition for Timothy to carry St. Paul's cloak and parchments from Troas, 2 Tim. 4. 13. Yet for particular paſtors in the management of church-government to do little more than to carry the copies and parchments of aſſociations about the country, and hang up their decrees on the pillars of churches, according to the order of the propoſal can never entitle them to ſuch a tribute of love and honor as the ſcripture does aſſign them, as the purchaſe of their great merits, 1 Tim. 3. 5. 1 Theſ. 5. 12, 13. Such bequeſtments as theſe from the fountain of honor, muſt ſignify more than ſome ſuch poor low ſervile buſineſs (no ways too high for Jereboam's prieſt to execute) as is laid out in the propoſal, but eſpecially if they have but ſome one head man to conduct and draw up the concluſion.

Sect. That the associated pastors do carefully and lovingly treat each other with that watchfulness which may be of universal advantage.

Answer 1st. Whether watchfulness is proper, or a term applicable to persons so qualified, so sacred, and in so high a function as those who are here intended?

2dly. Whether to institute watchmen over watchmen, be not to distribute the clergy into inferior and superior degrees, and so *ad infinitum*, &c. or at least till the churches of this country (for you must know this is one proposal made for their support) be supported and well ordered by suffragons, metroplitans, and other great pillars of those churches, where clergy-men in higher orbs, inspect those in the same order, who are beneath them in trust and dignity?

3dly. But if you intend honestly, only the watch of one brother over another, as is the duty of all christian people, one towards another, then I cannot understand the sense of the word, as applicable here, with the least good meaning or syntax imaginable.

1st. For though there is a design of new-modelling of men, and bringing clergy-men into another form of society; yet there is no intent divulged, that they shall co-habit, bed and board together upon certain charters, as the Friars or Benedictines, in their royal monastries. Indeed, the section might have been ingroit with the first canons of the *Dominicans*, or St. *Bennets* laws, when first entering upon their monastic life; but it no ways agrees with this constitution.

2dly. For, as for the occasional meeting of men, eminently sober and virtuous, what business can be supposed for a watch, for about the space of twenty-four, or forty-eight hours in such examples? Very bad men will hold out longer than so, in a good behavior, under the awe of but some one venerable person, or a grave *Cato*.

3dly. And when these eminent persons, members of the association, are dispersed to their own proper precinct, the proposal surely does not intend they shall follow the chargeable example of princes, who usually keep spies in each others courts, to inform themselves, how things are managed there; for its plain, the charge and expence in managing such a watch as this, will reduce all clergy-men to this dilemma, that they must either vote up the salary,

or vote down the method. But then the thing itself is not fair; for it would seem as tho' they watched more for the halting than the help of each other. But as for the proposal, a riddle I found it, and a riddle I leave it.

Sect. And that if any minister be accused to the association where he belongs, of scandal or heresy, the matter shall be there examined, and if the associated ministers find just occasion for it, they shall direct a calling of the council, by which such an offender is to be proceeded against.

Answer. I must boldly and freely enquire, whether this is an honest answer to the question propounded in the head of the proposals? Or whether in reality this is the supporting, preserving & well-ordering the interest of the churches there meant? If you mean as you speak, I am sure there is either some dishonesty or misunderstanding between the question and the answer; for it cant possibly be otherwise, unless the parts of speech are lately become a chaos, and all words are not only of the doubtful gender, but such unreasonable epiceens, that not only both kinds, but both contraries are signified in them; or thus, that to build, plant, repair, pluck up, pull down and demolish, are all now become convertable terms; for take away these high prerogatives from the churches, and you take away their being. These and such like royalties, are their *Formalis ratio*, or the formal cause (*per Quam Res est id quod est*) by which they are, what they are; and this will be very evident, if we do but read a short lecture on the churches essence anatomized, or let their essential and constituent parts and powers be viewed in the history, and philosophy of their own beings, and we shall quickly discern your mistake; for that end read platform, chap. 5. sect. 2. Ordinary church power, viz. of privilege belongs to the brotherhood, and may be acted or exercised immediately by themselves. And more directly to the case in hand, look into chap. 10. sect. 6. Where there we read, If an elder offend incorrigibly, the matter so requiring, as the church had power to call him to office, so they have power, according to order (the council of other churches, where it may be had, directing thereto) to remove him from his office; and being now but a member, in case he add contumacy to his sin, the church that had power to receive him into their fellow-

ſhip, hath alſo the ſame power to caſt him out, that they have concerning any other members.

Now herein we find an eſſential article in the government and being of theſe churches, that they have and hold ſuch juriſdiction over their own members; that the higheſt tribunal eccleſiaſtical on earth, is there; and that their own delinquent private members, and publick officers are triable only there, and there they muſt receive the definitive ſentence, and abide the execution of it.

And if ſo, then I ſhall make bold to revive my query again, viz. Whether the propoſal is either honorable, civil or honeſt, thus to tumble down at one blow, this high ſeat of authority? and to break open our priſon doors, and looſe the fetters of our great offenders? and at the beſt to take them out of our hands, and make their mittimus to foreign paſtors to do juſtice upon them, and yet in the mean time to profeſs, they are doing us no other injuries but only repairing and mending our churches? Again, whether this is fair, and work-man-like amongſt honeſt men.

But to make a ſtop here, I muſt remind you, that this head is not to be paſſed over ſlightly; for this is the one thing in the eſſence of our churches, it is their peculiar infranchizement and birth-right, and we may not ſell it with Eſau, at a cheap market; if we do, we undo ourſelves; for indeed you muſt know, here lies the marring or making of our churches; here is laid up their ſtrength, and here hangs the pick-lock of their treaſure; for by this key ſtolen, or wrinched out of their hands, the churches of Chriſt in the world, have been expoſed and plundered, for more than a thouſand years, and many of them have nothing at this day left them, comparatively, but a poor, ſtarved, ſhabbid implicit faith, and a dull, ſaturnal blunt and blind obedience, that a man would ſcarcely give a groat for both of them. In a word, the uſurpations of the paſtors, ſince the great revolt, having unſhackled one another, and broke looſe from the reſtrictions they are juſtly ſubjected to, under the churches power of privilege, has utterly undone the chriſtian world, from this root of bitterneſs and pride, from this ſeed ſprung up, the man of ſin, as we have it in an anomulous author, viz. the Eletherians, page 4. In words to this purpoſe, "Then a little prieſt had an opportunity to eſtabliſh himſelf, then

there appeared in the temple of God that anti-chriſt, who calls himſelf the vicar of Chriſt." And then the ſame author going on to diſcover the original of this monſtrous birth; he ſays thus, " Anti-chriſt was conceived in, by, and from certain affectations of eccleſiaſtical preheminencies." As though he ſhould ſay, the firſt ſpawn or embryo of that inſolent Hector, or aſpiring Nimrod, (who firſt robbed the laiety of their chriſtian liberties, and then hunted down the potentates of the world, and brought them as a rich ſpoil, into his habitation of violence) took its commencement from this principle, viz. from the clergies aſſuming to themſelves this eccleſiaſtical preheminence, viz. firſt their obtaining an exemption from the cognizance of the churches, for their crimes, and then in poſſeſſing themſelves of the ſole and abſolute juriſdiction (by a diſpotic government) over the churches themſelves.

But however things have been hitherto, I ſhall no longer uphold the debate, by reviſing the abuſes that have been done to the chriſtian churches by an ambitious clergy, in the ages paſt, which might more amply be diſcovered, by tracing the foot-ſteps of the great apoſtacy: But I ſhall end the whole diſpute on this head, by drawing up a proteſt, and denying the juriſdiction of the court, erected and opened by the propoſals, as being perfectly diſagreeing and repugnant to our former ſettlements, and preſent conſtitution.

SECT. IV.

THAT the candidates of the miniſtry undergo a due trial by ſome or other of the aſſociation, concerning their qualification for the evangelical miniſtry; and that no particular paſtor or congregation, imploy any one in occaſional preaching, who has not been recommended by a teſtimonial, under the hands of ſome aſſociation.

Anſw. To monopolize (in the great articles of trade) ſome very rich ſpecies, and of ſuch uſe for the good of kingdoms, that they muſt needs periſh without it, or be greatly injured by exceſſive ſales, is accounted by good common-wealths-men intolerable; for ſuch men or companies, ſo inveſted, can, with Joſeph in Pharoah's court, buy and ſell a country at their own prices; even ſo, when theſe churches have delivered up the right in their candidates to the claſſes, they may then go a begging to their doors

for their miniſters, and be contented to take what they are pleaſed to put off, and at their own lay.

Obj. But you may object, *Examen Ligon, non fit Mercurius.* Therefore the judicious muſt determine and ſet their mark upon what is merchantable, and throw by what is refuſe ware, or elſe there may be great damage done for want of caution. And thus we come to the plain point in hand, which is to be debated by diſputing this queſtion, viz.

Queſt. Whether a trial by aſſociation is preferable to the old cuſtom of the churches, in promoting their candidates for the miniſtry to public truſt?

Anſw. In the reply, I ſhall, firſt, conſider our candidates under trial; as to their qualification; and (ſecondly) implead the propoſal on a juſt prejudice from the corruption of the clergy.

1ſt. We may conſider our candidates under trial, as to their qualifications, (1.) As to their human learning; and here we abſolutely object againſt the trial of aſſociations, as bootleſs, uſeleſs and perilous, both to them and to us.

1. As to the aſſociation, it is no diminution, or treſpaſs upon the laws of honor or truth to affirm, "That the ſettled miniſtry in general (with ſome reaſonable exception) is leſs expert in grammar and points of philoſophy, than our learned children areat the degree of junior batchellors," and that from diſuſe, proved from all *experience*, *Nemo ejus Primatus fuit*; and alſo for the ſake of more divine ſtudies, which croud out thoſe firſt ideas a great pace, according to that obſervation, on a learned memory, *Imago Imaginem Expellit, Aliiſq; Alia Succedunt*, for as one wave thruſts out another, ſo one idea another. Therefore it is a pity to expoſe ſuch venerable perſons to the hazard in this ſervice, leaſt when they become peſers of others, they ſhould be poſed themſelves. I do remember an odd ſtory when I was at college; it was retained as a reproach on a very divine and worthy perſon; tho' he was bred in England a good ſcholar, and alſo had been a ſchool maſter, and had taught the grammar in his young times, but yet having laid by in a great meaſure, the uſe of ſuch things, for the ſake of more valuable and heavenly ſpeculations, being at the ſublime, and one of the corporation, ventured

in the hall, to propose this question, to one of the commencers.

Quot sunt Cœla!

To which the lad with sauciness enough, yet with a grammatical niceness, only answered,

Sed Audi.

Massula Duntaxat Cœlos vacitabis et Argos:

That Christians head will in likelihood be kept bleeding from one generation to another, by reason of some unlucky strokes, if this form be est blished, and that to the great detriment of those who strike the blows.

2dly. To Us. Academical learning we profess to be a very essential accomplishment in the gospel ministry. It is introduced by the ordinary blessing of God upon human endeavours, to supply the place of the cloven tongues, and those other miraculous gifts and endowments of mind, impress upon Christ's ambassadors, whereby fisher-men commence *(per Saltum)* doctors of divinity; and in an instant were stock'd with such principles of religion, reason, and philosophy, that they were capable to dispute with Athens it self, and baffle the greatest wits she could produce, in defence, and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, Act 17. 18.

Thus it is very reasonable that the churches should be well assured of the sufficiency of the learning of those persons, e'er they presume on the ministry; yet there is a fairer way in view, fuller of honor and safety, than what the proposal directs to.

Our academy is the store-house of learning, and this all mankind will assent to. When you have lost the company of the muses, there they are found in their freeholds, where they hold the ballance of honor amongst the learned. This is the place, if not of the goddess Minerva or Apollo, yet the Bethel or temple of God himself; the God of wisdom, where he, as chief architect, with his under workmen, form wise and learned men, and where you may have them wrought off at first-hand: Then certainly here we are to secure our credulity and confidence in this affair; here we are to know whether they be of the right stamp, yea or no.

That of all men living, the best and most infallible standard for the philosophical accomplishments of our candidates, is the judgment of the honorable president, and no-

ble fellows of our famous college; for this I am sure must needs stand for a verity, that the judgment of a real honest and skilful artificer (keeping close to his shop) concerning the nature and qualities of an edge tool which he hath wrought, and hammered on his own anvil, out of its first rude matter, must certainly excel him that hath been long from the trade, that only takes it, turns and tries the edge slightly, or has but a transient view of it: so that hence we may fairly infer, that (as to human learning) *Harvard's Commendamus* is most valuable and sufficient, and justly supplants these testimonials.

2. With respect to the more evangelical qualifications of the gospel ministry, we shall be ready to honor the sufficiency of the associates, yet must take liberty to object a few things.

1. Suppose we, that the trial is made *per Concionem ad Clerum*, by preaching a sermon, in audience of the association, and I think this is the way proposed and generally agreed upon, as the square or rule most agreable with gunter, to take the dimensions, length and breadth of our candidates by.

Reply 1. What can a sermon do at deciding this question? for that the most sensible and valuable, who are usually most humble and tender, are liable by this stupendious examination, to be baffled by their own timerity, and quite dash'd out of countenance by their own fear. Alas! upon their first entrance upon the stage, to appear in so august and awful a presence, this must needs disanimate and put their thoughts into a ruffle, as having in their affrighted minds the resemblance of their going into the Spanish inquisition, rather then dwelling amongst the softer measures of the gospel? Luther himself, (that unparallell'd instance of spirit and magnanimity, as I remember of his life) hardly ever got over something of a panick fear attending him, through the course of his ministry; and indeed men of the quickest senses are most liable to these paroxisms. Then surely to put our tyros to this test, which may daunt and dispirit the greatest hero, is no ways proportionable, especially seeing they may under the inspection of learned, honest and judicious men, both pastors and churches, and thereby under covert of more private invitations (with all their natural fear) creep into this noble work, and keeping on, as their courage and

ſtrength will bear the journey, may, gradatim attain a juſt and ſufficient probation, as our learned youth have hitherto done.

Indeed, the bold and brazen, who can make a greater figure with half the ſtock, by many ſhifting tricks, and diſſembling artifices, defended and ſupported with confidence and delivery, may obtain the *Euge Juvenis*, that they no ways deſerve, as will be found, when they come to be detected by a more dilatory ſearch, or a more tedious *Analyſis* made of them. That, to conclude, as the proverb is, *Una Hirundo non facit ver*; one ſwallow makes not the ſpring; ſo in this trial, one good or mean ſermon cannot determine the man, or umpire his caſe.

2. Suppoſe the trial muſt be made, and the queſtion determined by a perſon's converſation. And this is a very great article in the ſtate of all ſerviceable men, and eſpecially in the miniſtry, 1 Tim. 4. 12. 1 Pet. 5. 3. Being enſamples to the flock. Then certainly a more intimate converſe and ſociety, is a very inſcible plea. By the laws and cuſtoms of England, the vicinage muſt be allowed, as affording the moſt competent judges, when perſons reputation lies at ſtake in criminal caſes, becauſe they are preſumed to know ſomewhat conſiderable of perſons and caſes of their own knowledge; and ſo more capable of giving a juſt verdict. So in the caſe, what do thoſe perſons know of our learned youth, who make up the aſſociation? Our candidates appear on a certain day, (as blazing ſtars once in an age, and are gazed on, and then they vaniſh) Now what judgment can be made on a man's converſation, by ſuch a tranſient view? unleſs they muſt be handled in this conſiſtory, as perſons that have been bound to the peace, and in open court are to be delivered from their recognizance by three outcries?

3. Suppoſe the whole ſtock of miniſterial qualifications muſt be enquired into, and judgment muſt paſs by the direction of apoſtolic law, 1 Tim. 3. 2. Tit. 1. 6. 9. *Let them be blameleſs, ſober, apt to teach*, &c. and add what more you pleaſe, which the ſcripture mentions, to fill up the character of an evangelical miniſter, to compleat him in all his gifts and graces, either in his beginnings, or in his riper ſtate; and it is moſt apparent, that our particular paſtors and churches, with the learning, experience, grace, wiſdom and diſcretion they are owners of, can make a more

upright, judicious and solid trial; and give a better account of our candidates from their frequent converse with them, and their occasional and repeated preaching amongst them, than the wisest association in the world can do; and it is easier dissembling with the latter, than the former, unless the association will take them home, and both winter and summer them.

Now then, considering that their degrees with the express testimony of the college (when particularly desired) are sufficient testimonials of their learning; and the experience of their other good gifts and ministerial qualifications, obtained by converse, and their occasional preaching, has been the chief test and trial for our candidates; and by these methods they have been approbated in order to settlement in office-trust; and this has been the custom of the country and church for near four score years. Wherefore to conclude this argument, I make this proclamation, That if any person or persons, dissatisfied with our old settlements, and way in church conduct, will produce one example led into the public ministry by this practice, which has justly offended him, and he will or can evince this to be the blameable cause, we will then surrender the custom to your mercy.

2dly. I shall now implead the proposal on a just prejudice or presumption of corruption in the clergy, tho' we are in charity for the present, yet in this way proposed, we have no assurance for the future, against the corruptness of such societies; and let any sober man observe, and he will find abundance of poor tools under the mark of the office, where these measures, and such like, are in force and form. How oft is it repeated, that poor sordid, debaucht wretches are put into Holy Orders, when as they were fitter to be put into the flocks, or sent to bridewell for madmen, than to be sent with their testimonials, to work in Christ's vineyard? How long have the Indies, the seas, the provinces, and many other parts of the empire groaned under this damnable way of cheating God of his glory, and the world of salvation?

Simony we know began almost as early as the christian church, and has prevailed amongst clergy-men to a prodigy. The sacred things of God's house have been a trade and merchandize, which has beggared churches, and filled the clergy in some kingdoms with a sacrilegious and exor-

bitant pile of wealth, and the world with a flood of debauchees; and this proposal puts us into the way to open the shop-windows again, and expose the same wares to sale upon a little indulgence in our country; for who can render a reason that the same opportunities, the same temptations, the same corruptions, the same nature, and the same power, would not produce the same effects? or that the same climate, seed, ground, and manner of culture, should not yield the same grain at harvest?

And what have we in pledge for our security, more than the fallacy and slickness of human nature, when the power is delivered out of our hands?

Obj. You may object, that our candidates, thro' their own ambition, and the indulgence of particular pastors, thrust themselves into the work too young, and this our way will prescribe due boundaries to them?

Answ. 1. In general, *Paul* solves a worse case, than can be found (pick whilst you are weary for an example to quadrate with the objection, and render it forceable) amongst all our learned youth, who have hitherto adventured upon the ministry, *Phil.* 1. 18. What then? &c. as tho' he should say, What's that to you sir? If Christ be preached, all is well. And as to our case, we may say, despise not the day of small things, all men must have a beginning, and every bird which is pretty well fleg'd must begin to fly. And ours are not of the nest where *Icharus* was hatch'd, whose feathers were only glewed on; but these belong to the angelic host, and their wings grow out from their essence; therefore you may allow them, with the lark, now and then to dart heaven-ward, though the shell or down be scarce off from their heads. And so we conclude with our charitable and divine apostle. "What then! if Christ be preached, whether in pretence, or in truth, either by old or by young, yet therein we do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, &c. to see our *Nazarites*, so forward and well-disposed, it shall add to our joy, and no ways increase our horror, unless our ambition should surprize us with fear, that such young stars should out-shine us.

2. In particular, where will you fix the *Quando*, & settle the precise æra, or period of time, for their beginning?

1. There is no college or statute-law yet enacted, to decide this question: Then of necessity you must do domage to long and laudable custom, as to a superior authority, and

honorable ruler; & where that fixes the time, you must submit; for custom, when full of days, and of noble examples, becomes the common law of a nation; and is as sovereign and pleadable, as the dictates of a parliamentary power; at least it shelters from rebukes and calumny: That for any gentlemen to affront, talk high and frown at the early zeal and beginnings of our candidates, is but too much in imitation of the *Great Mogul of India*, who after he hath dined, orders his trumpets to be blown, to signify to the princes of the earth, that they have liberty now to go to dinner; and when he hath finished his formalities, if they please, they may vail their royal bonnets, and thank him for nothing; for where there is no law, there is no transgression.

2. Under the gospel, we have no precise time, though there was under the law, when to begin and enter into the ministry, the gospel knows no bar from time where persons are other ways meetly qualified. Days and qualifications, are divers things, and the latter are the essentials of a minister of Christ. It is not how old, but how capable a person is, which is the main point to be enquired after here. Therefore where (in some good measure) there is an honest life, a gracious heart, an orthodox head, and a learned tongue, there is no reason to send such youths to *Jerico*, with *David*'s messengers, (though their beards are not yet grown) to wait upon time and nature, for such an accomplishment; for certainly those recited are the principal in the argument. It is a story in the history of Persia, "That when the Grecians sent some very young noblemen upon an embassage to that court, the Persians reflected upon the Grecian republic, for sending beardless boys on so grave a message to so mighty a monarch," To which the young Grecians very smartly answered, "That if state policy did consist in beards, then he-goats would do for embassadors, as well or better than men." I must confess, I am some-what of their mind; and therefore I think it is not, how long men have lived, but how wise they are grown: God hath ordained praise out of the mouths of babes. *Jeremiah* pleads he was a child, but that cannot null his commission for the ministry, *Jer.* 1. 6. *Paul* guards the ministry of young *Timothy*, by heavens authority, to defend him from censure for audaciousness. What! for a child to teach old men their duty! Hold! says *Paul*,

1 Tim. 4. 12. Let no man despise thy youth. What shall not our great Lord illustrate his grace and power in what examples he pleases? Has he not formed all the powers of nature? and does he not furnish them with their distinct virtues, &c.

Object. But you may say, days are full of wisdom, and youth of ignorance in the great affairs of salvation.

Answ. Not always and universally so; as in the examples just now recited, and in many others that may be named, called in at the third and sixth hour, *Mat.* 20. But however, if our candidates must never begin till they are without ignorance, or not till they have gained all points (*ad unguem*) in the vast studies of divinity, then it may be said of all our ministers, as queen Elizabeth was wont to say of bishops, when she visited the schools (study hard children, study hard, for) bishops are old men. So of necessity, all our ministers, must be very old men. But I think that is more agreable with our necessity and state, both in nature and grace, which one of the ancients was wont to say of himself, viz. that whilst he studied to teach other men, he learnt himself. That considering theology, as well as art, is a long study, and life is very short, why may they not begin young? And also, considering that our churches are no ways over cluttered with candidates, there is no need to serve them as Christ did the money changers, who with a whip of small cords, he drove them out of the temple; and especially they having hitherto acquitted themselves in the main as men that need not be ashamed, and yet never any one of them, to this day, has been represented as learned or virtuous, or any ways supported by these testimonials.

SECT. V.

THAT they together be consulted by bereaved churches, to recommend to them such persons as may be fit to be employed amongst them, for present supply, from whom they may in due time proceed to choose a pastor.

Answer. According to my apprehension, this proposal insists very daringly over the churches in two things.

1. By ingrossing the right of jurisdiction, not only over the visible freedom and liberties, but conjugal and secret powers of Christ's virgin and widow churches. That it seems to me very advisable (if this proposal may stand for

a ſound precept) that forthwith another office be erected, and put into the hands and under the government of a few men, exactly ſkilled in phyſiognomy, and deeply ſtudied in the ſympathies and antipathies of human nature, with an abſolute ſuperintending power to controul and direct all wooers in their choice for the marriage bed; for that there is many a fond lover who has betrayed the glory of wedlock, by making an unwiſe and unfortunate choice; and why may not particular beds be over-ruled, as well as particular churches? both being for the good and ſervice of mankind, and for that both parties, huſband and wife, paſtor and church, by our ſort of government, are bound for term of life, or ſo long as both ſhall live. Indeed, were our conſtitution in church order under the ſuperintendency of a patron, or a lord biſhop, who can ſend *(pro Tempore)* a curate, &c. and then recall him, and place another in his ſtead, the project might be very adviſeable; but ſeeing theſe churches are ſettled congregational, and by their principles, the ordination is, as it were, the nuptials, or marriage day of two lovers, that nothing but death, or a bill of divorce (for betraying the glory of the union) can part; it is then good and reaſonable, that they be left to chooſe as they beſt affect, and not forcibly be tied up to a kind of Hobſons choice, one of theſe or none. This apparently puts too hard upon the churches liberties, and overthrows the government; for that our platform, in chap. 2. treating of the nature of the churches, aſſerts, ſect. 5. That the ſtate of the viſible church ſince the coming of Chriſt, is only congregational; therefore neither national, provincial, nor claſſical; then what does this propoſal do here?

Alſo, our platform aſſerts the free electing power of the churches, chap. 5. In theſe words, ordinary church power is that of privilege, ſuch as belong to the brother-hood, whereby they deſign perſons unto office. So alſo in chap. 10. In theſe words, the power granted by Chriſt unto the body of the church and brother-hood is a prerogative or privilege which the church doth exerciſe in the admiſſion of her own members, and in chuſing their own officers. Now if Chriſt has given theſe high powers and authorities to his churches, he has certainly furniſhed them with ſkill and wiſdom to manage them.

So we come to the second part of the affront in this propofal, and that is,

2dly. By its making a plain presumption of incapacity in the churches of doing their own proper work without their graces help. It is as much as to say, Alas! Alas! It is well known that the churches are generally a sort of plain men, little skilled in deep matters; that there is apparent danger, if left in their elections to their own conduct, of introducing very illiterate persons and doleful creatures, to preach in the temple of God, as officers there. Now this is much agreeing with the old arguments, against the laity, who were described by the learned to be without the knowledge of the original languages, and other parts of polite learning, and so no ways fit to interpret scripture; therefore it is very rationally enacted, that the BIBLE be taken from them lest they should study heresie and not holiness out of that divine book. But to pass by all such pleas, I shall come to the main point in plain terms, and that is this, our platform is our settlement, and it has secured to the churches these prerogatives, and they are part of their entailed inheritance; and it is a vain thing to pretend to plead the incapacity of right owners and rich proprietors, especially whilst there is a competent set of senses left them. Indeed, when any gentleman can shew any precept, and produce a commission for the taking into their hands the estate of idiot-churches, they may then cite their intellectuals to a proper bar, and verdict going against any particular example, they then, *Ipso facto*, become guardians, and may enter into their worship. But in the mean time, as to our own churches, and the whole constellations of them, and every individual or particular church amongst them remains *compos mentis*, and therefore must not be intrigued by such offers as these are.

But yet before I close this argument, I shall a little further humour the presumption of insufficiency here laid down; and therefore I shall desire, that a survey be made of the state of the churches, and if their free election be found for this thirty years last past (and we will go no higher) have by the major part of voices introduced insufficient officers, then let the platform be null'd, and the propofal stand as a more valid canon. And in this inquiry we would know, whether the dictators will give leave (in drawing up the catalogue of defective elections) that

they themſelves be put on the back of the title page, and there ſtand as the errata of our old government? Or whether they themſelves are the only exceptions?

But ſuppoſe we, when we have accompliſhed our ſearch, we find their own, and all other elections for the main have hit right; and if ſo, then whether we ought not to pay a veneration to the practice, as having more of Chriſt in it than we can in the ruffilings of ambition preſently find out, or perceive? And whether after ſuch long experience and good ſucceſs, it may'nt be our wiſdom to keep this *via Trita*, which we have found to be *via Tuta*, that is to ſay, keep the good old way of our bleſſed predeceſſors, leſt going into a new and untrodden path, we fall into ſome ambuſcado, and come off with broken bones and ruin'd churches?

Quicquid Præcipiti via.
Certum Deſerit Ordinem
Lætos non habit exitus. *Boeticus.*

Raſhly to leave the plain and good old way
Turns into mournful night, a joyful day.

SECT. VI.

THAT hereunto may be referred, the direction of proceeding in any of their particular churches, about the convening of the councils, that ſhall be tho't neceſſary for the welfare of the churches, about the convening of the councils, that ſhall be tho't neceſſary for the welfare of the churches.

Anſw. Query, Who muſt give the direction, and judge what councils are neceſſary for the welfare of the churches?

Anſwer. The aſſociation.

Reply, I thought as much; for the ſole and whole power, is, by theſe propoſals, reſigned to them, as their indiſputable and undoubted right, inſomuch that their *Beneplacita*, the *Elicit* and free reſolves of their will, ſhall and muſt be the abſolute and uncontrolable rule of conduct; that is to ſay, the churches are to be in vaſſalage; and the aſſociation is to rule all by prerogative; ſo that forever hence forward, we may inſcribe acroſs the door of the conclave (to notifie the rule of the houſe) that imperial law.

Sic Volo, sit Jubeo, stat pro Ratione Voluntas.

We will and doom, none now can us withstand ;
Our will is reason ; for the churches in the land.

Indeed, when great men turn beggars for small booties, with the famous general *Baziliareous*, it signifies, the ebb of fortune runs low with them ; but when they ask an ancient inheritence upon gift, it signifies either the doner to be in a languishing posture, and that his estate is like to escheat to the crown, through failure of natural heirs, or else great boldness in the beggars. But what should be the meaning of this demand, who can divine ? I hope they don't reckon the churches to be making their last will, and design them for their heirs.

The churches in New-England are fairly possest of this high prerogative, viz. Of convening councils necessary for their own well being, they are also as likely to continue as they were forty years ago, unless their own pastors should betray them. And they are also as capable of managing all instruments devolved upon them by Christ, as they were in the days of their youth. Then what can we make of this contrivement, viz. When the churches shall have occasion to seek relief by council (as sometimes the emperor, has been confined at the insolent threshold of his holiness, and upon his coming forth in his infallibility, this pile of temporal glory has been his horse-block ; and so here) they must humbly wait at the door of the association, till they shall be informed, When, what, who, and where they shall have one. But not to interrupt the world with long stories, we must again here demur upon title.

Sect. That the several associations in the country maintain a due correspondence with one another.

Answ. If the platonic notion concerning the universal soul of the world or spirit of nature (whereby one body is affected by the operations of another at some considerable distance) where established for an infallible theorem, and these societies could circulate their intelligence by the power and echoes of his mighty essence, the design might then be practicable ; or had we in all corners of our country, doves trained up to carry mails or packets of letters, from country to country, there might be some hopes for supporting this mighty correspondence ; but to do it wholly

by human means, the charge plainly threatens to eat out the profit.

But we may suppose the seat of these things shall be universally settled, fully butting upon the post road, and what a mighty business is a six-penny or four penny letter in such a good cause? Nay, indeed that's no great matter in itself, yet these six-pennys or four pennys, are like the sand on the sea shore, a great many of them put together grow very heavy, especially where wife and children are to be maintained upon 70 or 80 l. income per annum.

Wise men may do as they please, yet for my part, I can see no good policy in the proposal, unless you can court some rich potentate to espouse the cause, and sacrifice annually some part of his royal revenue to support the *Phantasie*.

Sect. 5. So that the state of religion may be the better known and secured in all the churches?

Answ. Religion in its infallible original, the wisdom and authority of God! in its infinite object, the ineffable persons and perfections of the divine essence; in its means, the gospel of salvation: In its inspired, wakeful and capacious ministry; in its subject, the inestimable immortal soul of man; in its transcendent effects. (1.) In time, the charming peace and joys of conscience. (2.) In eternity, the joyful retreat and shouts of glory, is the most incomparable gift of *Paladium*, which ever came from heaven; amongst all the favours of the father of lights, there is none parallel with this; when disclosed in its beauty, it ravisheth all the intellects of the universe; and challenge may be made, that the prerogatives and glory belonging to all the crowned heads in the world, do bow and wait upon its processions thro' the earth, to guard it from its innumerable and inveterate enemies. Yet in paying our veneration and attendance, we must distinguish right, and place every thing properly, and the means must be proportionate with the end, and agreable in their natures; or otherwise whilst we go about to accomplish a good end, viz. the security of religion by improper means we may lose our attempt, and have no thanks, but be blamed for our pains; for we must not do evil, that good may come.

It is certain, that the church of Christ is the pillar of

truth, or sacred recluse and peculiar asylum of religion, and this sacred guest, religion, which came in the worlds infancy from heaven, to gratify the solitudes of miserable man, when God had left him, hath long kept house with us in this land, to sweeten our wilderness state, and the renowned churches here, are her sacred palaces. Then certainly it is not fair for her lovers, under pretence of maintaining her, welcome in greater state, to desolate her pleasing habitations, tho' they stand somewhat low like the myrtle grove, Zach. 1. 8, &c.

Sect. And paticularly it is thought necessary to the well being of these churches, that all the associations in the country meet together, by their respective delegates, once in a year.

Answ. This is a great thesis; and whoever was the father, the womb of it is very fertile, and big with articles of moment; it comprehends a large territory, and a great treasure, we must therefore survey it by cosinography: And then nextly by the laws of the church stock.

1. The country contained in this proposal, by a just consequence, and from the nature of the design, must extend so far as we can find any gospel churches planted, or to be planted within the English dominion on the firm land or continent of *America*, there is no restriction made to exclude any; and charity is a grace that would have every one virtuous, and equally privileged with means for that end; so that we may begin our lines of latitude in in the south, somewhat northward of the capes of *Florida*, and then extend them to the north, to some parts of *Nova Scotia*, if not to the bay of St. *Laurence*, and from those points on to the atlantic; we must stretch our lines overthwart, keeping equal longitudes, till we meet with other princes dominions.

Now this is a noble territory; enough for an empire, and all English; and why may we not be thus extensive for the good of the churches therein planted? Other countries have sent their delegates near as far as this comes to, to wait upon the conventions of his holiness. But, the mischief is, the revenue won't hold out. But I have tho't of one way, and that will do, if we can but obtain; tho' I acknowledge it is somewhat chimerical, or whimsical; yet though it be, the proposal has no reason to repine or find fault, for that it is it's near kins-man.

The project is this, viz. Upon the great settlements which we hope for, between the two crowns, I advise, that petitions be made (if the articles of settlement will allow it) that either the rents of *Toledo*, or, some good stout gold mine in *Peru*, be reserved wholly to the use of this design, and if you are pleased to keep or settle within narrower limits, (when we know your territory) we can by rules of porportion and subtraction, compute the charge; and if there be any over-plus, when your own charges are defray'd, the rest may be assigned to the next province, for such good uses. But however, let the petitions go forward, for you will have want enough of your share; for I am sure your present supplies are not full enough for your daily bread, and these contingent and unexpected charges; especially seeing they were never thought of, or provided for, in your first settlements.

SECT. VIII.

AND finally, that ministers disposed to associate, endeavor in the most efficacious manner they can, to prevail with such ministers, as unreasonably neglect such meetings with their brethren in their proper associations, that they would not expose themselves to the inconveniencies that such neglects cannot but be attended withal.

Answer. This proposal seems to be founded upon the *Epicurian* doctrine of atoms; for by the scheme which athiestical atomists give concerning the beginning of the world, by their account; it was after this lucky manner, that is to say, there was before time a vast pile of incoherent atoms, which globically hung sleeping upon a centre-atom, without the least grain of sense, thro' the vast eternity, *a Parte Ante*; but at last, and no body can tell how, they were inclined to throw off their present posture; but being neither of one form, inclination nor propension, quickly great heaving and shuffling (from various sympathies and antipathies) began to be amongst them, that a chaos is presently rolled together, and in a little time, this magnificent and curious world, which you look upon, came out of the horrid womb of this distracted heap of atoms, and that without any help from a creating power, but by a wonderful good chance. Thus far you have the doctrine of atoms, which I could not well avoid, because of so much

noble matter pre-exiſting, and repeſented in various ſhapes and forms, with a ſound of motion, and various ſympathies and antipathies appearing, and repreſented by the propoſal; but yet can hear of no ſuperintending fiat, or any creating voice to over-rule, or ſay, *Let it be.* But only if perſons are diſpoſed, or indiſpoſed, the buſineſs muſt be managed as wiſely as you can; and if it ſhould ſo chance, that ſome fine thing (never before ſeen in the country) ſhould be made out of theſe materials, without the help of a creating power, the world would be a great debtor to the accident; and the churches may they not be juſtly ſtript of their being to make room for it, and maintain it?

But to be more diſtinct, and ſomewhat more cloſe in my anſwer, I muſt remind you, that our bleſſed Lord commands us to pray, Mat. 6. Our father which art in heaven, &c. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. And if ſincere, he hath promiſed, to ſtabliſh us, and keep us from evil. 2 Theſſ. 3. 3. From theſe divine principles, the queſtion is, whether thoſe paſtors are the ſtable or unſtable, the reaſonable, or unreaſonable men, viz. Either thoſe who have promoted this deſign in the country, or thoſe who have withſtood it? And alſo where has temptation prevailed moſt? And to put this debate under a brighter light, I will make bold to recite a brief hiſtory of this matter, till we bring you to the nativity of theſe propoſals, and to the day wherein they were born; with ſome preſent improvement of the hiſtory.

About thirty years ago, more or leſs, there was no appearance of the aſſociations of paſtors in theſe colonies, and in ſome parts and places, there is none yet. But after the country had ſuffered much in the ſlaughters and depredations committed by the heathen, and by many other afflictions, the neighbouring miniſters in ſome counties, met to pray together, &c. and for no other intent, that I ever knew or heard of. But after they had continued their meetings for ſome years, and others following the example began to converſe together, and communicate caſes, as beſt ſuited each perſon; and at laſt perceiving they were almoſt gotten into a claſſical form, before they tho't of it, they began to give their meetings the ſpecious titles of claſſes, aſſociations and eccleſiaſtical conventions, &c. as ſecurely as tho' theſe titles were a fruit growing out of our

own constitution; and by degrees began to dream that they were really, and *de Jure*, what their new titles and late custom had made them only *de facto*; and time increased their inclinations and purposes to compass a more formal and compleat settlement. It is certain, their opportunities were considerable, the keys of the church treasures being put into their hands. The more the main point is studied, the more glory appears to feed mens ambition, like the impression by the eye, on our great parents in paradice, Gen. 3. 8. The tree was pleasant to the eyes, a tree to be desired. Alas! Alas! empire and supream rule is a glorious thing! *Parcere subjectis et debellare Superbus*, is a very royal business. Now this conceit did begin pretty much to predominate, especially in some gentlemen that were inclin'd to presbyterain principles, men of worth and learning, who improving their advantages of sense and influence, to intreague others of a lower set of intellectuals, &c. brought the business so near to a conclusion, as you find it in the last recited proposal, wherein you have the main of this history contained, like *Homer's Illiads* in a nut shell. But to make short, and conclude my story; when they had thus far advanced and ripened their design, out comes these propolals, like Aaron's golden calf, the fifth day of November, 1705.

Thus have you a short account how things have been carried on, relating to associations; and having a convenient crisis, I shall improve the history, to promote my present design, in a few particulars.

1. By considering the present duty of our erring pastors.

2. The justice to be done on these propolals.

3. Make some small astrological remarks relating to the date, which the clew of our history has bro't us to.

1. As to the duty of such as are involved in the charge, whether or no (upon a presumption that this history be true) they ought not to cease exciting others to wander from their proper post, and they themselves (if not by the open acts of the churches authority, yet) by the good government of their own wisdom, prudence & grace, be remanded within their proper boundaries, & there continue as stars within their own orbs, to influence and act, *Tam in Modis quam in statis, quo prius*, according to the former usage, and

the nature of their truſt, and no more go beyond their own line, 2 Cor. 10. 16.

2. Whether theſe propoſals here offered to view, be not like Aaron's golden calf? And whether they ought not to be ſerved as Moſes dealt with that, (Exod. 32. 20.) when he took it, and burnt it in the fire; and ground it to powder; for that it is very evident, that though it be but a calf now, yet in time it may grow (being of a thirſty nature) to become a ſturdy ox, that will know no whoa, and it may be paſt the churches ſkill then to ſubdue it.

For if I am not much miſtaken (and *Pareus* too) That great and terrible beaſt with ſeven heads and ten horns, deſcribed in the Revelations 13, was nothing elſe a few ages ago, but juſt ſuch another calf as this is. It was indeed finely ſhap'd, & of neat limbs, when it was firſt calved; inſomuch that the great potentates of the earth were much raviſhed with its aſpect and features; ſome offered to ſuckle it on the choiceſt cows amongſt all the herds of royal cattle, (that it might be large) hoping to ſtock their own countries with the breed, & when it was grown to a conſiderable magnitude, to render it more ſhapely and fair, they put iron tips on to its horns, and beſet its ſtupenduous bulk with very rich ornaments, that they might make it the more awing to all beholders, and if poſſible, by ſuch artifices to add to the natural pride rnd choler of the creature.

But alas, poor men! they have paid dear for their prodigality and fondneſs; for this very creature that was but a calf when they firſt began to feed it, is now grown to be ſuch a mad furious and wild bull, that there is ſcarce a chriſtian monarch on earth, unleſs the great *Anne*, their Sweediſh and Pruſſian majeſties, and their High Mightineſſes, with this exception, there is ſcarce a potentate in the world, the beſt horſe-man or hunt-man of them all, that dare take this beaſt by the horns, when he begins to bounce and bellow. Indeed the emperor within theſe few years, has recovered ſo much courage, that he took him by the tail, to drive him out of his royal granges, being quite angry, and weary with his cropping and brouzing on the flowers of his imperial crown. But otherwiſe the beaſt generally goes at large and does what he will in all princes dominions, and keeps them in awe. Therefore to conclude, and infer, *Obſta Principiis*! It is wiſdom to nip ſuch growths in the bud, and keep down by early ſlaughter

such a breed of cattle. *Nam omne malum nascens facile opprimitur.*

3dly. In all the astrological remarks I have made, I find its nativity full of favourable aspects to English churches. The fifth day of November has been as a guardian angel to the most sacred interest of the empire: It has rescued the whole glory of church and state, from the most fatal arrest of hell and *Rome*. That had I been of the cabal, or combination, which formed these proposals; so soon as I had seen and perceived the date, (as I imagine) my heart with king David's, would have smote me, and I should have cried out, *Miserere nostri Deus*: The good Lord have mercy upon us; this is the gun-powder treason day; and we are every man ruined, being running *Faux*'s fate! why gentlemen! have you forgot it? It is the day of the gun-powder-treason, and a fatal day to traitors.

Our measures certainly intend the blowing up the churches, as *Faux*'s did the parliament; that for my own part, I have such an awe upon my mind of this very day, that I have made a settled resolution, that of all the days of the whole year, I will never conspire treason against my natural prince, nor mischief to the churches on the fifth day of November.

And so farewel, gentlemen, for I dare not join with you in this conspiracy.

PART. II.

SECT. I.

THAT these associated pastors with a proper number of delegates from their several churches be formed into a standing and stated council, which shall consult, advise and determine all affairs that shall be proper matter for the consideration of an ecclesiastical council within their respective limits, except always the cases are such as the associated pastors judge more convenient to fall under the cognizance of other council.

Answer. Seeing it is the first time we have in these proposals heard of a standing council for these churches, and though the whole doctrine of it is not precisely or in terms contained in this section, yet that we may pass over what remains more briefly, when I come upon each following section, I will therefore make a stop here, and dis-

courſe this ſubject, in its ſeveral diſtinct branches, and make but one work of it; and I ſhall thus methodize the buſineſs.

1. I ſhall obſerve the ſeeming favor to the lay-delegates here offered to them in this propoſal.
2. Survey the nature of the council.
3. Inquire into its original.
4. Take an account of the work which is aſſigned it.
5. View the time appointed, certain and uncertain.
6. Inquire for the place where it is to meet.
7 And laſtly, diſcourſe its maintainance.

1. We muſt obſerve the ſeeming favor the lay-delegetes or fraternity of the churches are treated with in this propoſal; for at the firſt tender, they ſeem very honorable to be invited into the aſſociation, as though they were to be eſtabliſhed members of this council; and were to be equal ſharers in the authority and government in it; yet do but mind the connection of both parts of the propoſition, and you will find there is nothing of this nature intended for them. But only by a ſpecious ſhew, they are invited to eſtabliſh the aſſociations on their tottering baſis, and that is ſoon done, if all parties are agreed; and from the fraternity, there is no need of any more formalities, than paying homage to their authority by this act of ſubmiſſion and obedience here propoſed; and ſo ſoon as this is done, you ſhall find the fraternity very fairly releaſed at the door of the ſeſſions, every man repairing to his own home. It is an obſervation, on the monarchy of bees, that the drones formerly ſuppoſed to be not only a lumpiſh, but a uſeleſs bee, yet is of that nature, and ſo eſſential a member of that common-wealth, that it is really the male-bee, and does impregnate the females, who are the ſole labourers in that kingdom, but when that criſis is over, the poor drones are by common conſent baniſhed, as a great incumberment. So in our caſe, alas! what can be expected, when the lay-delegates have done the former jobb, but that they ſhall be laid by, for their wiſdom and capacity is no ways admired in theſe propoſals. And it has always been found that the laity are a clog to clergymen, when they begin to ſoar a-loft, or above their proper ſphere; and if you will but view the propoſal again, in the hindermoſt part of it, you will ſee a back-door very artificially finiſhed and left upon latch, for their excluſion; for tho' they are called to be members of the council

in the first part of the proposal, yet by exception made in the last part, they are to sit upon no case but what the associates please; and seeing it is at their disposé, you may rationally and forcibly conclude, that those who have made it their business to unpin the whole tabernacle, and have but this choar to do, and then all is their own, will now finish their work with a wet finger, upon the aforesaid compliance. For you must note, that after they have admitted the brethren, and viewed the certificates of election from the several churches, containing some congratulatory compliments, to honor the new constitution and government, as is usual in all states, and having also treated the delegates with the civilities of the house, and also with a long and tedious harrangue of the mighty blessings these new settlements plainly predict and promise the country, &c. the delegates are then advised, there is no case at present depending fit for their cognizance, but what are upon file, the associates have already considered about it, and referred to some other council best known to their graces. And so good brethren, you are now with many thanks for your obedient attendance, released till *Latter Lammas*, or till the *Greek Calands* come about.

And here we may dig a grave to bury all our ancient privileges in, and hang our harps upon the willows, and when we are thus wasted, should you call us in once more to sing one of the songs of Sion, all our notes must be *Elegie et De tristibus*, yet the broken accents, and lowly murmurs of our sorrow will serve for clahs and sweet diapasans, in your conquering song of triumph.

2. We must nextly, survey the nature of the council, which cannot be sooner, and with better advantage (to represent the true idea of it to every man's understanding) than in a brief definition, thus, the council is to be standing and stated, to meet once in the year at least, and at other times as each association shall please to determine, to enquire into the condition of the churches, and advise such things as may be for the advantage of our holy religion. Thus you have the nature of it laid out in terms very concisely.

But if a longer description, according to the genuine sense of expressions in the propofals, will better suit you, and give a better impression of its nature upon your tho'ts we may then describe it thus,

It it a council of human invention, ſtated and ſettled to convene once in the year, yearly, during the revolution of the heavenly bodies, and at other certain times of the year, ſo as to keep its courſe parallel with our high and ſuperior ſeſſions of the peace, if the creators pleaſe; and to conſult, adviſe and determine all affairs within the reach of eccleſiaſtical councils, and eſpecially, &c.

And thus, we being a people ſwimming in ſuch plenty, that all our chargeable meaſures both domeſtic in our private families, and public in church and common wealth, being not near ſufficient, to take off our waſte, and ſuperfluous ſtreams, and our riches and ſtores ſo plainly overloading us, we have here formed a creature, that will help to ſup up all, & feeding upon our full baſkets, we ſhall find that the further we go with *Æſop*'s load the lighter we ſhall grow; then who will not admire the wiſdom of the invention?

3. Our next taſk is to examine the original of this council, which enquiry, may be reſolved into this disjunct propoſition, viz. This council in the reſult of the will, obeying the underſtanding in its laſt dictates, erring or not erring.

The queſtion being thus ſtated, it is at every man's liberty, to take the part in the disjunction which beſt likes him. I ſuppoſe the propoſal arreſted and brought to trial, will plead not erring, or not guilty, as is uſual with all criminals, when indicted; and therefore ſeeing you expect to be cleared by the jury, you muſt give us an honeſt account, who ſet you on work, and what rule you were guided by to aſſure us that your intellectual powers were free from error in forming this council, and we will give you room enough in your own defence. For,

1ſt. If you can produce evidence from the canon of ſcripture, in expreſs terms, or by ſound conſequence, and prove *New-England* churches are obliged to form a ſtanding and ſtated council, or that you are to do it for them, &c. we will ſubmit. But no ſuch canon can be found. The propoſals then incur a heavy premunire for making ſo bold with a ſettled government, and no text to warrant the attempt.

2. Is it by any authority, derived from the civil government of the country by law, or practice, that this council is here erected?

1. By law, if there be any such law, you have liberty to plead it in your own defence.

2. By practice, has the civil government ever set such an example? Have they ever intrenched upon the priviliges of the churches in the least degree? And in their own orb, are they not more exemplary? Don't all men keep to commission? Are they not curious in maintaining all settled forms, as the limits and boundaries of all mens actions and interests? Nay, is not the exalted head of this body politic in his whole ministry, careful to steer all his actions by his commission, and the precept of law? Is not the least error (though made by jealouiy, and not found in reality) that looks but like an arbitrary action presently drawn into complaint, as a great grievance, and common nusance? If it be but in dream, that the exchequer appears touched, without a precept, or the wings of our civil liberties clipt, or so much as a feather be plucked from them, is not the country here and the court at home filled with complaints? What means all this? And yet must these churches, formed by principles of piety and honor, and under the steerage of a wise and just government, bear whole cart-loads of injuries, and have all their liberties violated? And at last have a stated anti-christian arbitrary council, that can cut their throats for all the wise regulation, that is in it, be thurst in upon them, and both scripture and the wise fathers of the common-wealth, no patrons to it? And what must we swallow all this? This must needs be a very heavy meal to digest!

Ut opes et Lamentabile Regnum-----Eruerint?

They spoil our kingdom, and our courage dash,
They take our wealth, and leave us naught but trash.

3. Is there any certificate, order, or vote, from the churches, as the womb of this council? If there be, the propolals shall then pass for the innocent midwife, and no harm shall come. But alas! if we search all church records, the pursuit is blankt! Therefore it must stand for a daring intrusion upon the churches power of privilege.

It is and will be acknowledged, with great justice and satisfaction, that the pastors of the churches are in a high station, as they represent the great shepherd, and their

truſt is noble and great; they are rulers, and to conduct all tranſactions, &c. But yet muſt never infringe the churches power of privilege in any branch of it? It becomes the holineſs, wiſdom and honor of the ruling officers at a criſis, when the churches are in exerciſe of this power, not to allow themſelves to dictate too imperiouſly: They muſt never indeed, in all their miniſtration, talk with ſuch an elevated language, as in the 3d ſection of the ſecond part, in theſe words, viz. That each church chuſe and depute one or more (private members) to attend their paſtor in their ſtated ſeſſion, &c. As tho' the high commiſſion court was returned from exile, and now opened, and ſome of your graces were to be lord chancellor; this plainly carrieth too high a creſt. What! to conſider yourſelves as a diſtinct eſtate from the churches, and to ſend out of your higher houſe your orders to be obey'd in the lower houſe, &c? But, I ſay, this is not right, for in convening and calling of councils the churches are your ſuperiors; and upon a ſevere interpretation of their canons, they may, if they pleaſe, leave you at home. For tho' you have been elected once into office, yet in the exerciſe of this their power, you ſtand but competitors with other principal perſons, for their choice & election, to determine you members of an eccleſiaſtical council: Poſſibly this doctrine may ſeem to be but a very crude doſe. But yet I aſſure you, it is approbated by a college of very able and learned phyſicians; and I hand it to you as I find it made up in the churches cheſt of medicines, platform, chap. 16. ſect. 2. The efficient cauſe of eccleſiaſtical councils, or ſynodical aſſemblies, next under Chriſt, is the power of the churches ſending forth their elders and other meſſengers, &c. ſect. 3. Magiſtrates have power to call a ſynod, by calling to the churches to ſend forth their elders, and meſſengers, &c. for the conſtituting of a ſynod, is a church act, ſect. 6. Becauſe none are or ſhould be more fit to know the ſtate of the churches, nor to adviſe of ways, &c. Therefore it is fit, that in the choice of the meſſengers for ſuch aſſemblies, they have ſpecial reſpect unto ſuch, viz. elders: That certainly if you expect your council ſhall eſcape condemnation, you muſt then produce the *Probatum eſt* of the churches, or elſe it periſhes under this trial.

4. Can you ſhew any patent for the imperial chamber of our mighty monarch, to take into your hands (that

you may new model) these churches (the royal demesnes of Christ Jesus, the prince of peace) as an escheat to the crown? Or have you commission with instructions from thence to erect within the province, such costly and formidable assemblies, as are here projected? Nay, if you can find or pick up amongst the old statutes, that are not quite worn out, or produce one venerable precept or example throughout the whole English empire, for the government of church or state therein; we will state your case, and grant you one imparlance (with due time) if you can make any reasonable presumption, it may be had for your justification; and in the mean time, I shall venture to recite a few principles of the English government, that are like the *Vana Cava*, or great arteries in nature, which circulate the blood and spirits thro' the imperial body; and if they don't all with a joint voice (like a jury in their return, where no man dissents) condemn your council and whole scheme, you shall still have a goal delivery, and be set free.

Principle I. There is no one of the three estates of the empire, can make a valid act to bind the subject, or institute any new forms of government.

It is certain the parliament, that supream court, by an united voice, is very transcendent; it makes null, enacts, and abrogateth all laws, statutes and ordinances concerning matters ecclesiastical, civil, martial, martime, &c. Therefore all acts, institutions, creations of trust, corporations and offices either originally and immediately, or by a fair consequence, derive from this fountain the imperial crown, inricht with many prerogatives, and adorn'd with many ample flowers; they were there planted by the creating power of the nation, and no English monarch can at pleasure enlarge that garden with a new species. That to meet with such things as these now under debate within an English province, &c. Query, Whether they are enacted by single men, or small factions; or by the united voice of the kingdom? If not by the latter, they must die traitors to the empire, as transgressing against the essentials of its constitution, and liberty of conscience is no city of refuge here.

Principle II. All English men are privileged by and strickly bound to the law; that's the fruitful reason of all good, and rule of duty. To be bound to the peace, or

the good behavior, is to be bound to the law, that's every mans maſter and guide. Query, whether theſe propoſals, and this council, have not put a ſlight upon this dominion ?

Principle III. The vengeance or vindictive juſtice of the nation, flames (in the ſanction of the law) againſt all tranſgreſſors.

Every one that breaks the law, breaks from the rule of his duty and truſt, and in a degree violates the power of the nation, and uſurps the whole legiſlation ; therefore in the execution of theſe direful ſanctions and penalties affixed to the ſtatutes, the omnipotent power of the nation, revenges the glory of its own independence and unaccountableneſs upon its inſolent ſubjects, according to that, Gen. 2. 17. *In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* Therefore I may ſay to this council, *Memento Mori.*

Principle IV. Every great perſon is under the awe of the law, either as directive or coerſive.

It is the ſaying of thoſe who are ſkilled in the law, That *Reg in Rego Suo, Superiores habet, DEUM et LEGEM* ; The king has in his realm two ſuperiors, GOD and the LAW, tho' he is only under the directive ; but all his great ſubjects are under the coerſive power of it. The nobles and great miniſters in church and ſtate look upon the law as the watchful eye of ſome direful numen. The ſuperior clergy-men, the great biſhops of the kingdom, tho' they appear maſters of ſuch prerogatives, yet they have nothing but what they derive from the law ; and the laws are their boundaries, ſaying *Hitherto you ſhall go, and no further at your peril.* That thoſe great men might as well have undertaken with *Archimides*, to have removed the earthly globe (upon condition) as to have done ſuch a thing as this. What ! to alter the conſtitution of church government, which is eſtabliſhed by the ſtatute, and canon law of church and nation ? This is to blow up the whole kingdom. *Ergo*, put out your matches, and diſſolve your trains.

Principle V. All Engliſhmen live and die by laws of their own making. That they are never pleaſed with upſtart law-makers.

Principle VI. That Engliſh government and law is a charter-party ſettled by mutual compact between perſons

of all degrees in the nation, and no man muſt ſtart from it at his peril.

Query, Whether theſe propoſals have kept to the articles of this great covenant ?

Principle VII. Engliſhmen hate an arbitrary power (politically conſidered) as they hate the devil.

For that they have through immemorial ages been the owners of very fair infranchizements and liberties, that the ſenſe, favor or high eſteem of them are (as it were) *extraduce*, tranſmitted with the elemental materials of their eſſence from generation to generation, and ſo ingenate and mixed with their frame, that no artifice, craft or force uſed can root it out. *Naturam expellas furca licet uſque recurrit.* And though many of their incautelous princes have endeavored to null all their charter rights and immunities, and agrandize themſelves in the ſervile ſtate of the ſubjects, by ſetting up their own ſeperate will, for the great ſtandard of government over the nations, yet they have all along paid dear for their attempts, both in the ruin of the nation, and in interrupting the increaſe of their own grandeur, and their foreign ſettlements and conqueſts.

Had the late reigns, before the acceſſion of the great *William* and *Mary*, to the throne of England, but taken the meaſures of them, and her preſent majeſty, in depreſſing vice, and advancing the union and wealth, and encouraging the prowice and bravery of the nation, they might by this time have been capable to have given laws to any monarch on earth ; but ſpending their time in the purſuit of an abſolute monarchy (contrary to the temper of the nation, and the ancient conſtitution of the government) through all the meanders of ſtate craft : It has apparently kept back the glory, and dampt all the moſt noble affairs of the nation. And when under the midwifry of *Machiavilan* art, and cunning of a daring prince, this MONSTER, tyranny, and arbitrary government, was at laſt juſt born, upon the holding up of a finger ! or upon the leaſt ſignal given, ON the whole nation goes upon this HYDRA.

The very name of an arbitrary government is ready to put an Engliſhman's blood into a fermentation ; but when it really comes, and ſhakes its whip over their ears, and tells them it is their maſter, it makes them ſtark mad ; and being of a memical genius, and inclined to follow the court mode, they turn arbitrary too.

That ſome writers, who have obſerved the governments and humors of nations, thus diſtinguiſh the Engliſh :

The emperor (ſay they) is the king of kings, the king of Spain is the king of men, the king of France the king of aſſes, and the king of England the king of devils ; for that the Engliſh nation can never be bridled, and rid by an arbitrary prince. Neither can any chains put on by diſpotic and arbitrary meaſures hold theſe legions. That to conclude this plea, I find not amongſt all the catalogues of heroes or worthy things in the Engliſh empire, peers to theſe undertakers ; therefore we muſt needs range them with the arbitrary princes of the earth, (ſuch as the great *Czar* or *Ottoman* monarch) who have no other rule to govern by, but their own will. And therefore under this branch of our diſcourſe, and their arbitrary meaſures, I ſhall venture to annex the following Theſes, as concluſions fairly deducted from the premiſes, and leave them to conſideration.

Theſis 1. They have out-king'd all kings on earth, whoſe prerogatives are bounded, and their kingdoms governed by law.

Theſis 2. They have out biſhop't all the biſhops of *Great-Britain*, whilſt they they themſelves have acted with ſuch lawleſs liberty, and left the biſhops fettered in the ſtatutes.

Theſis 3. They have out-pop't the pope himſelf, who is head of an hierarchy, ſupported by certain laws, acts and ordinances, for the maintaining an harmony or union between head and members. So in the next place,

4. We come to ſurvey the work cut out for this council.

CATO, that great and grave philoſopher, did commonly demand (when any new project was propounded unto him) *Cui Bono* ? or what good was like to enſue ? Now in this preſent buſineſs, the definition pretends to make a ſatisfactory anſwer to ſuch a queſtion, viz. In the employment of this annual council ; and that is to inquire into the condition of the churches, and adviſe ſuch things as may be for the advantage of our holy religion.

It is certain, conſidering the nature of the creature here formed, there had need be ſome *Herculean* labor aſſigned. Thoſe who are purveyors, and muſt provide quarters, will find it very chargeable, that it had need do very extraor-

dinary buſineſs. As once king *James* the firſt ſaid to big-lim'd country fellow, who came to court to be a porter; ſome that knew him, told the king how many bowls full, and quarters of mutton he would eat at a meal; ſays the king to the fellow, You ſirrah, that eat ſo much more than other men, if you cannot do ſo much more work than other men, by my ſo'l (ſays the king) I'll hang you. So here, there had need go a handſome ſtock of ſmall cattle, and other expences to maintain one ſeſſions: that if it has confidence to meet, and is treated with an ordinary allowance, if it cant do abundance of work, it will be waſte charges, and great incumberment.

Now, if this be all that is here propoſed (in my opinion) the creators are very defective in their proportions; for tho' the work mentioned is in itſelf good work; but it's all done already to their hands, there is nothing of this nature neglected in *New-England* churches; at leaſt, no means or methods wanted; but as God ſays, *Jer.* 5. 4. "What could have been done more for my vineyard, that I have not done in it:" may properly be applied to the churches here, and all for the anvantage and good of our holy religion; that, in a word, there is no want in this country, unleſs it be the want of good and honeſt hearts; and I ſuppoſe you have none of thoſe to bequeath, *Mat.* 25. 9. Upon the firſt view of this ſtupenduous buſineſs, I was ready to fancy, whether or no you had dream'd of, or ſeen king *Henry* the eighth a coming with his old caſe and queſtion, which involved the pope, his conclave, and all the accademies in Europe, and whether you were getting a mighty caſuiſt ready, to take the king's conſcience into conſideration? Or, whether you had news of the old *Arian* war, its breaking out again, that you ſhould in ſuch haſte, (without citing other eſtates for the defence of the kingdom, but only by virtue of your prerogative) run up ſuch a formidable and coſtly redoubt? But if it be all come to this, and there is no more to do, than what every pious and wiſe man does every day, every week, and every ſeſſions, it is even another fit or paroxiſm of the mountains bringing forth, as the poet ſays, *Parturiunt Montes*, &c.

But to humour what would ſeem ſerious in the propoſal, I ſhall conſider both parts of the work diſtinctly.

The firſt is, to enquire into the condition of the churches?

Anſw. Now whether this precept, ſo full of ſweat and

ſervitude, may not vie it for merit, as equal in pains with any of the great prelates in Europe, in their laborious viſitations; who when they come into ſome capital town in the other part of their dioceſs, and being treated with the ſolemn formalities of ſumptuous feaſts by the nobility and gentry in the neighbourhood, and having ſpent the bigeſt part of their paſtoral viſit in glutting themſelves with honor and full tables; at laſt begin the other part of their work, and inquire (poſſibly) how many pariſhes in this great town, and whether there be any chyrurgeons, phyſicians or ſchool-maſters, that do good to their neighbours without licence? Or, whether there be any new *Golgotha*'s to be dedicated, for the ſecurer retreat of the dead to that place? Or, whether the pariſh curates read ſervice well, and obſerve to time their particular leſſons, with the canonical days? And eſpecially, whether the bells are kept in good order? All which makes up a noble piece of ſervice, to requite a crown or kingdom for the revenues of a barony! And, whether it may be thought, that our great and yearly council, will come a whit behind the aforeſaid miniſtry in the firſt or laſt part of ſervice mentioned? And whether if they do but equal them, we may not be thought to have made a wiſe ſettlement? But notwithſtanding we ſhall grant, the propoſal makes mention of a chriſtian duty; for that it becomes all men, who bear a love to Chriſt, to enquire into the ſtate of his churches, both for the manifeſting their love to men, and directing their prayers and gratitude to GOD. Therefore,

1. As to their outward and temporal ſtate, we may inform ourſelves, by virtue of neighbourhood, by chriſtian travellers, and public letters of intelligence: and thus we may rationally, and with very good moral certainty know the ſtate of the churches, both in other countries and our own; and thus good Nehemiah informs himſelf at *Shuſhan*, how it fared with his brethren at *Jeruſalem*, Neh. 1. 2, 3.

2. As to their moral ſtate (which conſiſts in their profeſſion, faith, manner of worſhip, diſcipline and converſation) this is diſcovered particularly, by their directories, confeſſions of faith, platforms, rubrick, liturgies, and other canonical ſyſtems, made public for that end, &c. And conſidering, that whatever of this nature is neceſſary for the advance of religion, is well adjuſted in this country, it muſt needs be but a vain repetition, or fearleſs tautology

for a council to meet yearly or quarterly for this end, viz. To enquire what news, or whether New-England's confession of faith is the same this year, as it was last? Or, whether all the churches, their manner of worship, is this sabbath as it was the other? And as to their conversation (which may seem to lie most out of sight) sufficient provision made by the principles of our wise platform (for upholding the communion of churches) for our enquiry and information here also. And thus we come to the other part of this good work, viz.

2. To advise such things as may be for the advantage of our holy religion.

Answ. Query, Whether or no there be not published weekly from the oracles of God (and that with great soundness and zeal) more truth in a day than all New-England can practice in a long time after? And whether all the churches in the whole land are not honored and addrest, from week to week, in such measures by infallible truth, if not by infallible men? Or whether or no these methods dont divulge the whole mind of God to each plantation? Or, whether these gentlemen have any secrets of wisdom not yet made known? Or, whether they intend to serve the churches, as some great philosophers and profound artists in medicine serve the world, viz. such who carry some great inestimable *Catholicon* to the grave with them? And, whether they will be thus hard hearted in religion, as the other are in philosophy, unless he will gratify them with this piece of prodigality here exacted? I must acknowledge I have little patience towards these things, that under such a specious shew and pretence, such a direful catastrophe should be shrouded! I must needs say, its plainly some of *Joab*'s friendship, when he spake quietly and peaceably to *Abner*, smiled in his face, as his friend, but stabbed him to the heart, under the fifth rib, that he dropt, and died.

But however, I shall endeavor, to rescue myself from all impatience, and with deliberation sum up my answer, in an appeal to your own reasons concerning these several created trusts, which God has established, and cloathed with his own authority, every one of which is acted with great vigor, and success; and whether you think you can do more than all these for religion? Or prescribe something new which they never tho't of. As,

1ſt. Civil authroity, in two great branches.

1. Legiſlative power (that civil omnipotence) is doing very great things for religion, by their proclamations, and all penal laws enacted for the cruſhing of immorality and vice, and all their wiſe and exact precepts for the ſupport of juſtice and piety. They are opening many civil channels, whereby they are conveying judgment, juſtice and righteouſneſs down our ſtreets, from the great fountain. Nay, this great and dread aſſembly puts awe upon all mankind. And the more daring and deſperate are kept within compaſs, from a ſenſe of this moſt terrible ſeat of thunder hanging over their heads, & upon every affront ready to break in ſtrokes of vengeance and woes upon them, eſpecially if they grow beyond the reach of common law.

And in ordinary caſes.

2. The executive power, or miniſters of the law, are like a ſtanding camp to awe, and a flying army to beat off the enemy; they have their ſpies and ſcouts out in every quarter to obſerve his motions, and break his meaſures, viz. In the innumerable numbers of all ſorts of civil officers; and thus by the ſword of juſtice they hunt down ſin and impiety in the land. They are a terror to evil men and a praiſe to them that do well; for the civil authority, by their wiſe and juſt precepts, their perſonal and noble examples and zealous adminiſtrations, out-do *Plato* himſelf with all his moral reaſons; for they can turn a Sodom into aSion, and keep Sion to beSion evident by the hiſtory & chronicles of ſeveral governments of God's ancient people. *Nam Regis ad Exemplum Totus Componitur Orbis.* For chief rulers, by their good or bad meaſures, can make or marr, kill or cure a nation, in a moral ſenſe.

2 *The churches.*

View once more, from ſome lofty promontory or *Piſgah*, thoſe goodly tents and tabernacles of Iſrael! Liſten! Is not God with them, and the ſhout of a king amongſt them? Are they not as valleys ſpread forth, and as gardens by the river ſide, which the Lord hath planted? And yet notwithſtanding, may we, muſt we under your conduct, break up their fences, to give them another ſort of culture? Nay, conſider well! Are not the flowers better wed, and the weeds more kept down, than in moſt of the incloſures in the world, belonging to the great huſ-

band-man? And may you not (in reckoning up of means) allow us peculiarly to ascribe to their government and other of their measures agreeing with the nature of it in dressing the ground? But I will not enlarge this head; it is obvious enough from their ministry, from their faith, their discipline and conversations.

3. *The nurseries of learning.*

1. The inferiour schools, where the leaven is laid hid and kneaded in the soft dough; *Et Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros*, &c.

2. The college (that artillery garden from whence we receive our most expert soldiers of Christ, and whence Christ's troops are supplied with cheif commanders, who lead on to storm the strong holds of the common enemy, and secure our great ally, religion) this is the seminary of learning and virtue, and the success is almost to a miracle, unless for humiliation we must secret the great grace and gifts of God which flow from that fountain, and are dispersed through the land.

Query. Were a council called, of all the learned heads of the whole universe, could they dictate better laws, and advise better measures for the acquirement of learning the increase of virtue and good religion, than are in tha royal province?

4. The families of the country with their œconomy and family religion; if we take a survey of the whole land we shall find religion placed in the body politick, as the soul in the body natural. *Nam est Tota Anima, in Toto Corpore, et Tota in Qualibet parte*; that is, the whole soul is in the whole body, and whole in every part. That were any other part of the body organized besides the head, it would be capable to exercise reason, &c. So religion is placed and exercised in its principles, virtues and governments through the families of the country, so many families so many little sanctuaries.

I do acknowledge, there is no general rule, but has its exceptions; but under this caution I may affirm, there is no such spot of earth in the earthly globe (so belaboured with family devotion, reading God's word, catechizing and well instructing youth, with neat and virtuous examples and divine prayers, *non ex Codice, sed ex Corde*, not out of books, but out of hearts, the solemnizing sabbaths and

and family attendance on public means) as is *New-England*. And if so, then what need have we of this late invention? Therefore to conclude, I shall, for my own part, with the jealous *Laocoon*, enter a caution against taking down the sides of the city, or opening the walls of our Sion to let in this Trojan horse; and let all Israel say, amen! For, blessed be God, tho' we want to have our hearts renewed daily, but as for means, though we have no glut, we have plenty enough, and want no new institutions.

We come now to measure, and find out the time appointed for the council.

1. Certain, viz. Once in the year at the least, all the associations in the country, and according to the most plausible interpretation of the proposals, one or more lay-delegates shall join and meet yearly and every year in the great assemblies.

Answer. As *Austin* says of time, *Vivo in Tempore, Loquor de Tempore, sed Nescio quid sit Tempus*, I live in time, I speak of time, but yet I know not what time is. So I do imagine, the dictators did not well weigh time by exact ballance, in all its contents, sense and meaning, when they carved out such a large proportion to this illegal claimer. Time is justly esteemed precious, in relation to heaven and grace, and also very valuable with respect to the interest of nature and this life. Therefore, care should be had, that it been't squandered away wastfully. Our natural lives, healths and honor, families and estates are all very significant and costly things, and their dependence is much on the well husbanding of time, insomuch that in hard & penurious climates, the inhabitants had need be very saving of time for the support of all these great interests, and especially seeing there is so much time already set off for religion. As,

1. The seventh part of time is assigned by the wise author of time, and that well improved, will do much for the support of religion.

2. There are great proportions (out of the time left to our dispose) frankly bequeathed for the good of religion, as in courts, churches, college, school, families, closets, and in many other sacred intervals, breathing spells from the hurry of business, render to men more sedate and heavenly (called time out of season) and all for the service of religion; then to add and make this offering also, without a divine mandate, is but a work of superarrogation or super-

ſtition, and ſo will prove not only a needleſs, but an extravagant victim.

And moreover, to add a juſt aggravation or two, to ſet forth the evil in the impoſition, I ſhall, with them, conclude the plea.

Aggravation I. Is taken from the great and ſufficient care and proviſion made by the 15th and 16th chapters of our platform, for the convening of occaſional and needful councils, for the ſervice of the churches, and ſupport of religion upon all emergencies. Then what need we throw away ſo many years of time at a venture, as is here tendered in the propoſal, before our neceſſities or occaſions call for the expence; unleſs we would in imitation of the *Rhodian Coloſs*, or *Egyptian Pyramids*, erect a monument of our vain glory and pride, more than of our prudence, policy or duty.

Aggravation II. Is taken from the great affront real and rational, done to empire.

1. *Real*, In making thus bold, with the time and eſtates of loyal ſubjects.

2. *Rational*; For let us but conſider, that about three hundred men (gown men, and ſword-men) with twice the number of attendants, which will make up near a thouſand ſtrong (and all well hors'd and provided) to be muſtered no man living on earth can tell for what, cannot be well reſented by crowned heads, thoſe admirers of order: That the project carried on, may breed jealouſies in the heart of our prince, leaſt that *Ket*, *Cade*, *Straw* or *Tyler* have pitch t upon an oak of reformation again, with an intent to overhawl the government, &c. And eſpecially ſeeing the crown was never adviſed of any ſuch thing (as is propoſed) by the regular forms of empire. There is danger of loſing our time, and the credit of our loyalty together; that all things conſidered, the beſt way will be for us to keep well, whilſt we are well; and therefore let every man and ſociety be adviſed to improve their time wiſely, keep in their poſt and honeſtly ſtudy to do their own buſineſs, which God, law and regular ſettlements has intruſted them with; and we may then hope things will go well with us, and our holy religion.

2. *Uncertain*, viz. When the creators pleaſe, and can agree, for the more particular time is beſt left to the determination of each aſſociation, as the propoſal affirms. And

thus we are left very uncertain, when, where or whether it will ever be; so that I preceive, you have no great dependance upon it, neither must we; The wisdom of civil government hath another sort of conduct. Such things are not left to discretion, for that would be indiscretion, and the way to turn the world into a bedlam, or the dwelling-place of mad men. And in the example before us, suppose the arbitrators (when the question for the time is propounded) should differ, and hotly dispute the matter; and some should plead, it was best to be in the winter, and some in the summer; some argue for the fall, and some for the spring, according as every mans temper leads him; and at last, referring to a majority of voices, should they (for want of an odd man) lock it by an equal vote, and so keep it like a game at chess for several years on the table, and neither side get the mastery; we may then in our distresses hollow whilst our throats ach, & no help comes; for they have voted themselves fast (like two bucks in their own horns) and can't stir for our relief.

6. We must, according to promise, make some enquiry whether this council is to meet, or for the place of meeting?

It is held in opinion, that castles in the air, & immaterial substances do not occupy place; philosophy assigns them no more than a *Ubi*, where many may exist in *Puncto Indivisibli*, or on the point of a needle; and if this council is (as I apprehend it) belonging to that conjugation or cataloglue of beings, it will then have this privilege belonging to it, viz. There will be no house to build, nor house rent to pay,

7. We come now (in the last place) to consider its maintainance, by three queries.

1*st*. *Query*, Whether the churches in their expiring, must (as all criminals do) pay for their own execution, and their estates be confiscate, and reserved as a fund, yielding a certain stipend per annum, to support their executioners?

2*d*. *Query*, Whether the contingent fees of the sessions, or the free and voluntary contribution of clients, may be thought a medium sufficient? Or,

3*d*. *Query*, Whether it must not be here, as it is in some civil cases, under the cognizance of a very peaceble and good natured justice, that for the healing of a difference amongst neighbours, advises them to agree, &c. and so let every man bear his own charges.

But how it is, or which way they intend to raiſe a ſupport for a ſtanding council, yearly, and every year, I cannot find out; there is no ſtipend ſettled, or proviſion made in the canons, which give it being.

It is certain, in the hiſtory of God's works, he firſt makes his houſe, &c. then furniſhes his table with great varieties; and then invites his gueſts, and makes them welcome; and ſo it is with all regular created efficients both rational and natural; but in this ſcheme there is nothing done for the ſupport of the new born infant, but like a run-away dam, you leave it to the mercy of the heavens. But poſſibly the relief is ſtored up in your creating power; ſo that if the charitable churches will but find a cradle for the firſt night, and naturalize it, you will by your creating fiat, ſoon find a fortune, if all the tythes in the province will do it.

Thus, according to engagement, we have paſſed through the ſeveral heads, relating to the ſtanding council, and I think by the analyſis, it is ſufficiently reſolved into its firſt nothing; and therefore in what remains, I ſhall be more brief in my anſwer.

SECT. II.

THAT to this end, theſe aſſociated paſtors, with their reſpective churches ſhall conſociate and combine.

Anſwer. There is plainly an *Hyſteron* and *Proteron*, (a prepoſterous ſpeech, or miſplacing of terms, paſtors and churches) in this ſection; and though in rhetoric it breaks no great ſquares, yet in politics, where the juſt boundaries of governments are to be ſet out, the miſ-placing ſome great words, may ruffle the whole ſcheme; ſo that according to the more wary idiom of our church government, it ſhould be written thus, viz. The reſpective churches, ſhall conſociate and combine, and their paſtors ſhall attend and miniſter, as their duty does oblige them.

SECT. III.

ACCORDING to what has been by the ſynods of theſe churches recommended, that they act as conſociated churches, in all holy watchfulneſs and helpfulneſs towards each other.

Anſwer. *Titus* the Roman general, is very honorable for his great pity to the Iſraelites, in many examples that

fell into his hands ; but all this while he was in siege of that famous town and temple, and designed to root them out of house and home, or subject them to the mercy and pleasure of a conqueror.

So here. Though you smile upon us, in reciting some of the principles of our own government, (for which we thank you) yet still we must observe the noise of your mattocks, that we may meet with your trenches, for you are still carrying on your works, and undermining us.

SECT. IV.

IT is propounded, as that which from our beginning, has been recommended, &c.

Answer. You seem to reflect upon our beginnings, with a singular air and aspect, when you find any word or passage, that falls in with your design, as though you were sensible those things were very argumentative and binding ; and indeed they are so. Then why cant you fall in with the whole settlement, and say to yourselves, what need we stand puzling our heads for new schemes about church-government ? There is one from our beginnings, that is compleat, being adjusted by the laws of honor, and assigns to all parties their due, and gives to officers rule, power and honor enough ; therefore let us, now we are met, order a new impression, and so break up. For alas, alas ! What need you, like the thievish bird, pick here and there a straw or a feather in our yards, to build a new nest ? or now and then gather up a kernal, or a grain out of our first fruits ? The whole plantation and crop is yours, if you please to make use of it ; and it will be your livelihood, as it has been hitherto ; only you must remember to pay the quit-rent, as honorable tenants, and not take yourselves to be lords of the manor.

SECT. V.

THAT the association shall direct, when there is occasion, for this council to convene, on any emergency, and shall direct whether the whole, or only a certain number of these consociated pastors and churches shall convene on such occasions.

Answer. The beg'd prerogatives of clergy-men come so thick in this place, and smell so strong of the pope's cooks and kitchen, where his broaths and restoratives are prepared, that they are enough to strangle a free-born Englishman, and much more these churches, that have lived

in such a clear air, and under such enlargements so long a time. For indeed, (forsooth) four score years has brought (not our hogs, but) our innocent flock to a fair market, if it is come to this, that clergymen may buy and sell them (as the Romans did the Jews) thirty for a penny, or at least say, pro and con, at their pleasure, upon all the high immunities and ancient liberties of the churches, lion-like (who claims the whole prey, and leaves no share to his allies, *vel Actum est de Amicitia*) all is mine (says he) or farewell friendship.

SECT VI.

IT appears agreable with the present condition of our churches, and from our beginning acknowledged, that no act of the council is to be reckoned, concluded and definitive, for which there has not been the concurrence of the major part of the pastors therein concerned.

Answer. 1. The specificating act, that impowers any member for an ecclesiastical council, is the churches election or delegation, according to our government; so that the members sent, are invested with the power, and represent those who send them: The officers have no more of this power devolved upon them, than any member, and therefore can challenge no more right (as elders) in a major or in a negative vote, than any others, as is very apparent in all representative bodies; therefore all acts must be determined by the majority of the whole, as in the house of commons, though made up of men of many different characters, when in their own countries, both as to their trust, learning and wisdom, and other distinguishing qualifications; yet the meanest man there has as great a force and power in his vote or suffrage, as the best man in the house, for that they all equally represent the nation, one man as much as another; So in this case; for that the churches and officers were never yet since New-England stood, held or accounted two distinct estates in an ecclesiastical council. Therefore,

2. Your challenge plainly defines your intention, that is to null the power of the churches, and set up yourselves, as the subject or fountain of a superintending power. And then, if the churches may have so much favor as to represent themselves by their lay-delegates, in a council you shall see meet to call, you must needs allow them to be a distinct house and estate. And if so, then you must grant

them the privilege of a major vote, as well as yourſelves, and ſo nothing can be acted but by their compliance alſo. But I muſt acknowledge, I have no plenipotentiary power to ſettle articles of agreement, for the infringing any of the rights of the churches, and therefore muſt draw up my memorials or complaints of incroachments upon ancient lines and boundaries, and ſo leave them.

SECT. VII.

THE determinations of the councils, thus provided for the neceſſities of the churches, &c.

Anſwer. Let any man read the 15th and 16th chapters of our platform, and then judge, whether the neceſſities of theſe churches are ſo urgent as this propoſal, with too much falacy inſinuates, or whether they are any ways in Eſau's ſtraits, who thought he might ſell his birthright for a meſs of pottage, if not to ſave his life, yet to gratify his peeviſh and diſtruſtful hunger.

SECT. VIII.

IF a particular church will not be reclaimed, &c.

Anſwer. This whole long ſection is the third way of the communion of churches, laid out in the 15th chapter of our platform, almoſt *Totidem verbis*, or, in ſo many words. And whether or no the annexing ſome of the principles and rules of our vindictive and more public juſtice to the ſcheme, will ſufficiently atone for the diſſolution of the whole frame, which is intended by you?

CONCLUSION.

THESE propoſals were aſſented to by the delegates of the aſſociation, met according to former agreement at *B. Sept.* 13th, 1705, to be communicated.

Anſwer. The church of England has been wont to look upon us as men out of our wits, therefore they term us phantics, or mad-men, but much more now. What! for men to break from the government they themſelves have eſtabliſhed by conſent and practice, and arbitrarily to rally together, and draw up a direful ſentence (if not in terms, yet in intent) for the diſſolution of a country full of the beſt churches of Chriſt in the world, and then (as it were) upon the bold ſound of a trumpet, to excite others to ratify the dead warrant, in order to execution! What can this import or ſignify in the thoughts of conſiderate men, but a vertiginous brain? We might have learned better, and more caution, from that mother church of the

nation, if not from common reason ; for though our sovereign confides in the loyalty of the English clergy, yet to maintain the grandeur of government, and keep in good repair that common fence, which keeps every man in his station, therefore, according to the law and custom of England, the convocation, both the higher and lower house of that learned and august assembly, neither debates nor transacts any matter whatsoever, but what our sovereign by commission expressly alloweth of, according to his prerogative ; so that certainly to acquit yourselves for wise men you should have done no less (in a matter of such weight and moment) than have petitioned the public authority for commission, before you had ventured thus far.

Object. But possibly some may say, We have petitioned authority to establish our councils, since we have drawn them up in form.

Answ. This is to be preposterous, and agrees with that illegal way of hanging men and then judging them ; but however it seems they turned a deaf ear to your demands ; and well they might, for they are two wise men to alter the laws of the province, long customs and orderly settlements of the churches to gratify an implicit faith in the stark naked *Ipse Dixits* of any men ; that unless you can produce a mandamus from the crown, or a precept from a higher court, which by its divine authority shall awe and direct them, you may alway expect such entertainment in your precarious addresses ; for most certainly you beg at the wrong door. For you beg without a brief.

To be commended to the several associated ministers in the several parts of the country, to be duely considered.

Answ. And why not commended to the general court, as has been the custom of our beginnings, &c. or why not commended nextly to the several churches ? By the question proposed, the comfort, support, and well being of these churches was peculiarly pretended, then why might not they be nextly advised with, for their approbation or esteem ? for if you intend it for a new suit, or change of apparel, or a set of armour for this army in banners, it must be the only way to try it on, it being now so near finishing; and if it be done work-man-like, you will have the credit and they the comfort of it ; but if it prove too strait-laced, or should they feel themselves as David in

Saul's coat of mail, and ſhould ſhrug at it, and ſay, we cannot go in theſe, we have not proved them; yet they may throw all by and keep to their own old ſuit, which is not yet half worn, and the worſt come to the worſt, you may by any lawful writ recover your wages of thoſe who ſet you on work to blow at this forge.

That ſo what may be judged for the ſervice of our GREAT LORD, and his holy churches.

Anſw. You acknowledge, and ſo do I, that theſe are holy churches, and (through the grace of their great Lord) they being ſo; then why ſhould they be interrupted in their government and diſcipline, which has been a peculiar means for the advance and promoting holineſs among them? They are ſtrict in their government; curious, yet charitable in their admiſſions; in the election of all officers, they are nice, cautious, judicious, and in the main hitherto very ſucceſsful. They are eagle-eyed in their watch; duly hot, and impartial in their proceſs and exemplary acts of juſtice; and ſo dependent and free from arrogance, that they acknowledge themſelves accountable under the eye of the conſociation, for their aſtminiſtration; and freely and without covin, render an account of their actions, and are willing to receive advice, and &c. Then why ſhould you diſturb them?

You acknowledge them to be holy churches, and you may well! Then certainly they are the bethels, where God dwells; and from his grace and preſence, ſo illuſtrious in them, why mayn't we conclude, God has ſaid, this is my reſt for ever, here will I dwell, for I have deſired it? And will then any good man have an hand in pulling down theſe tabernacles of the almighty? No! rather let every man involved, ſay, as once Job did, I will lay my hand upon my mouth; once have I ſpoken, but I will not anſwer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further, leſt I am found fighting againſt God; for it is moſt certain, all men will find themſelves over-match't in ſuch a war.

Be proceeded in.

Anſw. I think we are proceeding in the beſt method we can for the preſent, for the ſervice of theſe churches. that is to ſay, the criminal propoſals being now at the bar, and having been indicted upon ſeveral ſtatutes; and evidence for proving matter of fact, being legal and ſufficient, the caſe is now to be delivered to the great jury of trials,

viz. The impartial reaſon of the churches, and there having been no ſuch deed done, or ſeen, from the day that this good people came up out of the land, from the other ſide of the great ſea, unto this day, conſider of it, take advice and ſpeak your minds, Judg. 19. 30.

And upon due deliberation, if under the conduct of law and reaſon, you ſhall bring in guilty; then I petition for the crown, that juſtice be done in this following manner, not by baniſhment, præmunire or perpetual impriſonment; but that the propoſals be ſentenc'd to die the death of hereticks, and their aſhes be expoſed to the four winds; that the whole ſcheme may, beyond all hope of retrieve, be loſt in oblivion. And let the churches, according to their platform, recover and maintain their authority, liberties and luſtre, ſo long as the ſun and moon ſhall continue.

The date,-----*November the 5th* 1705.

Anſw. Bleſſed! Thrice bleſſed day! Uphold and maintain thy matchleſs fame in the kalender of time, and let no darkneſs or ſhadow of death ſtain thee; let thy horizon comprehend whole conſtellations of favorable and auſpicious ſtars, reflecting a benign influence on the Engliſh monarchy. And upon every return, in thy anniverſary circuits, keep an indulgent eye open and wakeful upon all the beauties (from the throne to the footſtool) of that mighty empire!

And when it is thy misfortune to conceive a monſter, which may threaten any part of the nations glory, let it come crippled from the womb, or elſe travel in birth again, with ſome noble hero, or invincible Hercules, who may conquer and confound it.

The laſt binding vote.

At an aſſociation meeting, the fore-going propoſals were read, and aſſented to.

Anſw. Whether for a ſmall juncto of gentlemen, without being orderly called (as a committe of wiſe and learned men to ſurvey an old government, and make their report) by any ſupream authority; for them of their own heads, to meet and to draw up articles againſt, and in imitation of the higheſt and moſt regular ſtate on earth; to vote up a ſcheme of their own inventing, and thereby ſign the condemnation of a grave eccleſiaſtical government, which has been adjuſted by the rules of equity and honor, and for the ſecurity of all perſons and parties intereſted and

involved, and regularly settled and established by all the churches in the province; and owned ratifyed, and honored by the civil authority of the empire; and eminently blessed God, through a long series and succession of years; now whether such a daring action as this, can be placed under any of the topicks of political or moral wisdom, either of the fear of God, allegiance to their prince, or love to their country? Or whether or no they don't (for their defiance to the churches, in this bold and terrible vote) rather merit a page in the chronicles of time, and there in capital letters, be written, not an association of wise, but, a faction of disorderly, &c. and impolitic men?

The introduction to personal signing.

PRESENT.

Answ. A council of war (by adjournment met, without commission) consulting the most plausible way to blow up the walls of our Zion. But where the place was, or the persons who were present in this rendezvouze, shall never be told by me, unless it be extorted by the rack. And tho' I have endeavoured with freedom of argument to subvert the error, I will never stain their personal glory by repeating or calling over the muster-roll.

Therefore, as *Noah's* sons cast a garment upon their fathers nakedness, (so leaving them in the crowd) their names (for me) shall repose under a mantle of honorable pity and forgetfulness.

Yet wishing they may never more harbour such thoughts, or promote such a design as is projected by these propofals; but hereafter when temptation makes its signal, let them rather trespass upon gravity, by following the hounds in the forrest, or by a more submissive and moderate way (to baffle the enemy, and wear off the impression) let them write on the ground, or with the famous *Domitian*, spend the time in catching flies, rather then contrive how to subvert or alter the government in the churches, by such dispotic measures especially in an empire and province so charmed with such inchanting liberties as ours are. For otherwise they may chance to bring, if not an old, a new house upon their heads, according to that saying, *Debile fundamentum, follit Opus.*

A work if done, and no foundation laid,
Falls on the work-mens head; thus they are paid.

The following is an Extract from a Book intituled, *New-England's LAMENTATIONS*, wrote by the Reverend Mr. JOHN WHITE, late Paſtor of the firſt Church in *Glouceſter* ; to which is ſubjoined a Letter by another Hand, ſhewing Reaſons for adhering to our PLATFORM, as a Rule of Church-Government, and Objections againſt Ruling Elders anſwered : Which extract and Letter are here inſerted at the Requeſt of a Number of the Subſcribers to Mr. WISE's two Publications.

"THE preſent weak and ſhattered ſtate of our CHURCHES, on the account of their Order, Government, and Diſcipline, (ſays Mr. *White*) is matter of LAMENTATION. This is evident to every perſon of obſervation. Hence particular churches run into confuſion. Many are aggrieved, and abide year after year in their ſorrowful circumſtances. And a farther evidence thereof, is the ineffectualneſs of councils to relieve the aggrieved, and to make peace. As alſo anti-councils, whereby contrary reſults are given on the ſame caſe, to the great reproach of councils, and blemiſh of our church government, and diſcouragement of the aggrieved, who are ready to lie under their troubles as remedileſs. Hence it is that ſome councils have perſwaded the church and aggrieved, to promiſe to acquieſce in the determination of the council, before they heard the caſe, by which their conſciences have been enſnared, and the council turned into a ſolemn Arbitration. This therefore is matter of juſt Lamentation.

I come to enquire,

1. Into the MEANS, which have brought us under theſe lamentable circumſtances. In a word, 'tis our being prejudiced againſt, and not attending to the rules and principles of congregational churches, as laid down in our platform. To go from the rule is arbitrary ; and to go againſt profeſſed principles, making our wills the rule, is tyranny. And when a people fairly poſſeſſed of liberties

and privileges, are thus dealt with, this leads directly to contention and confusion.

1. These churches have not attended the rule, as to the compleat organization of churches. 'Tis the privilege of a church to chuse its own officers; as, platform, chap. 10. sect. 5. viz. The power granted by Christ unto the body of the church and brotherhood, is a prerogative and privilege which the church exerciseth, in chusing their own officers, whether elders or deacons, &c. So ch. 6. sect. 4. Of elders some attend chiefly to the ministry of the word, as pastors and teachers; some attend especially unto rule, who are therefore called ruling-elders. Now the want of these officers exposes churches to arbitrariness, contentions and confusions. As also it renders the government of the church, in some cases impracticable. An instance of all these great inconveniencies, we have lately had in a neighbour church; where all possible endeavors have been used by the aggrieved(a very great and valuable part of the church) to have a church-meeting, and when there was great occasion for it; and yet it could not be obtained: They had not a church-meeting for about 14 years: Whereas if they had been furnished with a full supply of officers, they might have easily obtained it, and by that means put an end to a long and very threatning contention. Besides, had the pastor called the church together at their request, there being but one elder, viz. a teaching one, and he the (supposed) offending party, it was not possible according to congregational principles, to have proceeded to judge and censure in that case. For ministers are under no ecclesiastic government, but in the church, where they are members as well as ministers. Now 'tis a rule in the congregational government, as in platform, chap. 10. sect. 11. No church-act can be consummated or perfected, without the consent of both; that is, the eldership and brethren. Now tis not at all proper, that an accused and faulty elder should be a judge in his own case; therefore when he is the peccant party and no ruling elders to join the brethren in an act of discipline and censure, there cannot be a valid act. And so it is also when a minister is the accuser. Thus by the disuse of ruling elders (so necessary in our constitution) the government is rendered weak; yea, in some cases impracticable. Therefore it was that when the synod convened, Oct. 15, 1679,

to enquire what wanted reformation in the land, and to propose expedients therefor; in the 5th place they say, "Tis requisite that the utmost endeavors should be used, "in order for a full supply of officers in the churches, according to Christ's institution; the defect of these churches on this account is very lamentable, there being in "most of the churches only one teaching officer for the burthen of the whole church to lie upon. The Lord "Christ would not have instituted pastors, teachers, ruling "elders, (nor the apostles ordained elders in every church) "Acts 4. 23. Tit. 1. 5. if he had not seen there was "need of them for the good of his people; therefore for "men to think they can do well enough without them, is "to break the second commandment, and to reflect upon "the wisdom of Christ, as if he did appoint unnecessary "officers in his church. Experience hath evinced, that "personal instruction and discipline have been happy "means to reform degenerate congregations; yea, and "owned by the Lord for the conversion of many souls. "But where there are great congregations, it is impossible "for one man besides his public labours, fully to attend "those other things of great importance, and necessary to "be done, in order to an effectual reformation of families and congregations." Thus the synod.

2. Again, these churches have reduced their church-state to great darkness, by not attending the rule of our constitution in councils. It has been the practice of councils convened according to the second way of communion in our platform, who are only to hold forth light, and give advice, to usurp the power of judgment in matters of fact, as also the power of admonition, in case of offence. Which to do is proper to the third way of communion; and supposes that a church wants correction for an offence, and not merely light and counsel. And by this means the third way of communion has been shut out, and not practiced. This thing I am bold to say, has been the occasion of all our anti-councils, as well as the contentions and confusions churches have been left in, after all endeavors used by neighbor churches, by way of councils.

2. I come to the other thing remaining, and that is, the METHODS of our relief.

And here I would say,

1. Let our churches be advised to get compleatly fur-

niſhed with church-officers according to the platform. By this time I hope ye ſee the neceſſity of it. Ariſe, for this matter belongs to you; and tis juſt matter of offence if you neglect it any longer.

Remember, it is neceſſary in a congregational church: And the miniſters and members of theſe churches would do well to get reconciled to every part, and branch of the conſtitution. Prejudices againſt, averſions and diſaffections to the ſame, have greatly threatened the utter diſſolution of theſe churches. Our government is firm and ſtrong; but if ſuch as ſhould keep it in good repair, do weaken it, it is in danger of falling to pieces. A brick houſe (be it never ſo firm) if every tenant takes out a brick, in time it will be weak, and ſhatter to pieces. But ſome objections offer, which it may be needful to remove.

1. Obj. Our reverend paſtors are againſt it, and think that the office is not of divine right.

Anſ. 1. Miniſters ſhould reconcile themſelves to the congregational government before they accept of the paſtoral office in ſuch a church.

2. There are eſpecially three ſcriptures, which may ſatisfy the ſcrupulous, as to the divine right of ruling elders; as, Rom. 12. 8. 1 Tim. 5. 17. 1 Cor. 12. 28. God has ſet in his church, governments. Theſe are church governors and diſtinct from teachers; who elſe can they be but ruling elders? Let ſuch as have any conſciencious ſcruples in this affair, weigh in the ballance of the ſanctuary, the arguments brought for the divine right of ruling elders, in a book entitled, *Jus Divinum Regiminis Eccleſiaſtici*; as alſo a ſheet not long ſince publiſhed, entitled, *The Divine Right of Ruling Elders*; as alſo, a rational and nervous letter lately publiſhed on this argument. Enough is ſaid in theſe to ſatisfy an unprejudiced mind as to their divine right.

3. 'Tis the right and privilege of the brethren to chuſe their officers; and therefore if they be clear in the matter, they ſhould not be diſcouraged or obſtructed in the uſe of their juſt liberties.

4. If the paſtors will be ſo arbitrary, as utterly to refuſe to call the church together to chuſe theſe officers; I ſuppoſe, the church may look upon themſelves in that caſe, and ſo far, to be without a ruler; and may convene for this purpoſe, as when they have no miniſter to chuſe

one. It must be a great abuse of a minister's power, to obstruct the church in the exercise of that power or privilege, Christ has given them, for the preservation of their peace and purity. Englishmen can't patiently submit to arbitrary measures. Two kings, within our memory, have smarted for attempting it. One lost his head, the other his empire. And will English Christians tamely submit thereto? Can they be easy, when those, who by divine appointment are to minister to them for their spiritual edification, Lord it over them who are God's heritage? 'Tis unreasonable for any to desire or expect it, and base for christians to submit to it.

Obj. 2. We would proceed to chuse ruling elders, if there were any men in the church fit for it.

Ans. 'Tis God's work to fit men for offices in church or state. 'Tis your duty to chuse such as are best qualified, and depend upon God farther and more fully to fit them. I remember, as introductory to our election of ruling elders, near thirty years ago, I preached from those words, Num. 11. 25. And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, (that is to Moses) and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it to the seventy elders.----- There is the residue of the spirit to furnish for every office of trust, to which one and another is chosen. And in that the getting ruling elders was opposed by many in town and church, I preached another sermon from those words in 2 Tim. 2. 25. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. Reformations are commonly attended with great oppositions. Lay aside then I pray, your objecting, and attend your duty.

2. Let discipline be prudently, strictly, and impartially exercised in particular churches. Negligence and partiality herein is very hurtful to the peace, purity, and growth of churches.

3. Let councils move in their proper sphere: Let them act agreable to their nature, and the rules laid down in the platform. Let such as are called to give advice, and to hold forth light, do that; and proceed no further.

4. Come into the practice of the third way of communion, as laid down in the platform. When a church is rent with division among themselves, and lie under any open scandal, and yet refuse to consult with other churches

for healing and removing the ſame, this is matter of offence ; and the aggrieved making a complaint hereof to a particular church, this church is in a chriſtian manner to make enquiry, and demand an account of the other church, in order to their conviction and admonition, if faulty ; or in order to their vindication, if innocent : as in platform, chap. 15. There has been in times paſt, great oppoſition to the practice of this rule. But the late venerable council held at Salem, ſaw cauſe to countenance the practice of that way of the communion of churches, and adviſed the aggrieved there, in caſe they receive not ſpeedy ſatisfaction from the reverend paſtor, purſuant to the reſult and advice of ſaid council, to apply to a particular church in the neighbourhood for help, as directed in the third way of communion. Which thing I humbly apprehend will prove of greater ſervice toward the eſtabliſhing theſe churches, than any thing done for ſcores of years. For,

1. 'Tis that rule, and the wiſe practiſing it, that wipes off the raproach of independency from congregational churches. They are unaccountable, unleſs in this way.

2. 'Tis this rule that preſerves churches pure in their communion one with another. For if a church gives offence, & continues obſtinate in any ſinful way, and other churches hold communion with ſuch diſorderly church, & dont uſe all poſſible means to reclaim her, they are partakers of her ſin. But there is no other regular way to enquire into her adminiſtrations, to convince her, and admoniſh her, and ſeparate her from their communion, but this. Altho' one church has not authority over another, yet churches have power to preſerve their purity, and to put a church obſtinately offending out of their communion ; or elſe they muſt hold fellowſhip with her in a ſinful way.

3. This rule is neceſſary to the peace of particular churches, as it will effectually relieve perſons aggrieved. There can't much peace be expected where a great part of a church, are gauled by arbitrary meaſures. But in this way they muſt give ſatisfaction, or ſuſtain the ſentence of non-communion. And this opens a door for all aggrieved ones, to reſettle in an orderly way, in ſtated fellowſhip in ſome neighbour church, as tho' they had been diſmiſſed.

4. This rule doth effectually hinder anti-councils, or having councils againſt councils ; of which there have been too many inſtances, to the great reproach and con-

fasion of these churches. For if aggrieved persons are allowed to call councils, the church has power and liberty to call them; and by this means, anti-councils come upon the stage. But if the aggrieved make complaint to a particular church, there is no possibility of anti-councils. Tis therefore much to be wondered at, that such mighty opposition has been made against introducing this rule into practice in these churches. And tis matter of thankfulness that the way is prepared by the foresaid council at Salem, for the practice thereof.

Obj. It may be objected, this rule was not put in practice in the early days of these churches.

Ans. 1. Our fathers were but men, and had their defects. Hence, though they in the synod declared so fully for the full supply of officers in the church; and this result of the synod was approved by the general court, recommending the same to the serious consideration of all the churches; yet how shamefully has this expedient for reformation been disregarded by most of our churches!

2. I suppose the true reason why the third way of communion was not practised in our early days, was because then there was little or no occasion for it; churches were more tender and willing to receive light, when offered by councils called in the second way of communion: And when it is thus, there is no room for the practice of this rule.

I shall add the following moving considerations.

1. Our church-government is too good to be slighted and thrown away. I am persuaded 'tis nearer the scripture and better warranted and supported by it, than any church government in the world.

As to the church of England, there is no scripture foundation for their hierarchy, as, arch-bishops, lord-bishops, arch-deacons, officials, chancellors, &c. Of late, by one and another masterly hand, the following truth has been set in so clear a light, that none but the wilfully ignorant can resist it, viz. That the scripture bishop, is no other than the pastor of a particular church. And it is an innovation and usurpation, that they are dignified as they are in the church of England. Besides, to take out of the hands of the presbyters or pastors all rule in the church, is unscriptural: for what is more plain, than that they who watch for souls, are to rule over them also? as Heb. 13. 17. Their taking away from churches the liberty of

chuſing their own officers, is an intollerable invaſion of the right of churches, as well as their introducing many unſcriptural ceremonies into divine worſhip.

Again, the preſbyterian government, I grant, has been accompanied with eminent holineſs; as witneſs the church of Scotland, Geneva, and many other reformed churches. And I acknowledge there is but little difference between them and us; eſpecially, if we have ruling elders, and practiſe the third way of communion. Yet wherein we differ, I am humbly of opinion we have the ſcripture on our ſide. Let any if they can, give a genuine interpretation of the 1 Cor. 5 chap. and exclude the brethren from having any hand in church diſcipline and cenſures. Beſides what is written, Mat. 18. Tell it to the church; that is ſay they, to the miniſters. This is to put the ſcripture upon the rack, to make it ſpeak what we would have it. Let us then be thankful for our conſtitution; ſtrictly adhere to and practiſe it.

2. Our church-government, if ſtrictly adhered to, will effectually anſwer all the intentions of government. There is no member in a church, no church in the whole conſociation of churches, tho' never ſo ſtubborn and obſtinate, but muſt ſubmit, or ſuſtain the dreadful ſentence of non-communion: which methinks no good miniſter and chriſtian can make light of.

I ſhall conclude the whole with a few words further by way of advice or counſel.

1. Let us be very thankful to God, who has hitherto ſecured for us our civil and ſacred privileges; notwithſtanding our great barrenneſs and unprofitableneſs, yea, and our many and great provocations. God is ſlow unto anger, and abundant in goodneſs and kindneſs. We have for an 100 years enjoyed the diſpenſation of the glorious goſpel, in its power and purity, and free from perſecution. What could God have done for this his vineyard, which he has not done, in order to our fruitfulneſs?

2. Let us be warned againſt withdrawing from the fellowſhip of theſe churches, until we find more pure churches and worſhip; and of a more ſcriptural faith and order. Such as break with, and break off from theſe churches, becauſe their ſtubborn wills will not ſubmit to the juſt and regular cenſures of the church to which they belong; or becauſe they cant have their will, as to the place

of their worſhip ; theſe deſerve the character of heady and high-minded. And if their unreaſonable deſires are reſtrained by the civil government, then they will turn churchmen. Surely ſuch church-men are guilty of will-worſhip with a witneſs. Theſe converts are worthy to be called children of Belial, who riſe up againſt lawful authority, and take ſanctuary in the church. The church of England doth too much honor our churches, when they account thoſe worthy of their fellowſhip, who are worthy to be rejected by us. I would whiſper in the ears of theſe thoughtleſs and unnatural converts, not to ſay apoſtates ; will you raſhly, and to have your wills in leſſer matters, return to a ſtate of bondage, when you enjoy matchleſs liberties and privileges ? Will you take upon you a yoke which your gracious predeceſſors could not bear ? Will you bring a burthen upon poſterity, which is intollerable, to humour and eaſe yourſelves ? Know, when the yoke is once on your necks, you muſt pay the tythe, the tenth part of which you are apt now to think is too much for you to give, or your miniſter to receive. And do you think the vaſt arrearages will not be recovered, one way or other ? I mean the vaſt ſums expended for the propagation of the goſpel ; that is, for the bringing over our churches to the mother church.

3. Be kind to your miniſters ; and dont give them any juſt provocation to deſert you, or to endeavor to reconcile themſelves to the diſcipline and ceremonies of the church. The diſcount of the bills of credit has inſenſibly and exceedingly hurt them in times paſt ; and it is well if it be not ſo to this day with ſome. I am fully perſuaded that miniſters ſalaries ought in juſtice to be raiſed nearly in proportion to the depreciation of the bills of credit ; for the price of the neceſſaries of life riſe in proportion. By no means diſcourage the hearts, or weaken the hands of your faithful miniſters, who are willing to ſpend and be ſpent, in the ſervice of your precious ſouls. Eſpecially be cautious at this juncture, when ſo great temptations are laid before them to deſert you, and go home and take orders.

4thly, and finally, Study the principles of your faith and order ; be heartily reconciled to, and be zealous in the defence and practice of them. And as often as any of our holy churches do want a paſtor, I would adviſe them when treating with any candidate in order to ſettlement,

to know his mind with respect to the professed faith and order of these churches; and proceed not to election, until he has given his assent to the one, and his promise to practise according to the other. This indeed is implicitly done by his acceptance of the invitation of a congregational church; but the more explicit, the better. And when the elders and messengers of neighbour-churches are (upon invitation) convened, to assist in the solemn separation of a pastor to the sacred work of the gospel-ministry, in his ordination; they would doubtless do well to satisfy themselves in these things, lest they be found to lay their hands too suddenly upon his head.

To conclude, Let us then stand fast in the liberties wherewith Christ hath made us free, Gal. 5. 1. Our country thinks it worth while to spend many thousands, in defence of their civil privileges, settled upon us by charter; and are not these sacred privileges of equal, yea of greatter worth and value? O then let us contend earnestly for the faith and order of the gospel, lest we be found to despise our birth-right, and to destroy ourselves."

JOHN WHITE.

The following Reverend Gentleman recommended the foregoing, as well worthy the perusal of the Public.

PETER THACHER,
JOSEPH SEWALL,
THOMAS PRINCE,
JOHN WEBB,
WILLIAM COOPER,
THOMAS FOXCROFT.

Boston, Jan. 25, 1733-4.

REASONS

For adhering to our PLATFORM, as a Rule of Church-Government, and Objections againſt Ruling ELDERS anſwered. In a Letter to a Friend. By another Hand.

SIR,

I Received a meſſage from you, that a friend of yours deſires to have ſome reaſons (drawn up in writing) to ſhew why we ſhould adhere to the PLATFORM as a rule of church-government, at leaſt till another & better be provided. I wiſh a better head were employed in aſſigning reaſons for it: But to gratify you (in the interim) I ſhall give you the general reaſons inducing me to be of the opinion that we ought ſo to do. But firſt I premiſe, that whereas it is objected, That the ſcriptures are the only rule both of worſhip and diſcipline, and that it is both ſinful and dangerous to ſet up human compoſures as our rule; I perfectly agree with the objectors and acknowledge that no human compoſure ought to be received, which diſagrees with the holy ſcriptures. But if the platform muſt be rejected merely becauſe it is of human compoſure; then by the ſame parity of reaſon, not only the aſſociation principles, but alſo all ſermons, confeſſions of faith, creeds, catechiſms, and the like, are to be rejected, theſe being alſo human compoſures. And it is very obſervable that the ſame perſons who are for rejecting the platform, would at the ſame time have us ſubject to ſuch a government as they themſelves ſhall from time to time fancy to be agreable to the ſcriptures; not allowing us to judge for ourſelves, whether it be agreable to the ſcripture or not; nor willing to be governed or reſtricted themſelves by any rule, except the ſcriptures in the ſenſe they themſelves underſtand them, or (which is one and the ſame thing) by any other than what agrees with their own ſentiments. And with this allowance I ſuppoſe the Pope himſelf could comply with the ſcripture as the rule of his government.

But that there ought to be a platform extracted from the Holy ſcriptures, as a particular rule of church-government, and that it is our wiſdom and intereſt to adhere to ours, at leaſt till another and better be provided, is evident to me, from the following conſiderations, viz.

1. The nature, use and ends of all government necessarily imply ORDER: Order cannot be preserved without known and certain rules: The duties of rulers and ruled must be stated, circumscribed, and limited by a rule; otherwise rulers may be tyrants at pleasure, and subjects rebel whenever they have opportunity, and neither of them be accountable.

2. Tho' the scriptures are in themselves a perfect rule, and the only standard by which all other rules are to be tried; yet it is evident that through the darkness or corruption of men's minds, this rule is very diversly understood and practised upon, both with respect to doctrine and discipline. Hence the authors of the most corrupt doctrines pretend to the scriptures to support their tenets. So with respect to church-government, the congregationalist, the presbyterian, the episcopalian, yea, and even the papist, pretend to rule and govern according to the scripture. So that they don't so much differ upon the question, whether the scripture shall be the rule, as upon the question, how the scripture is to be understood; or what is agreable and what contrary to it.

3. Hence it follows, that without some platform or constitution, there can be no orderly government upheld. This appears to be agreable to the sense both of papists & protestants, episcopalians, presbyterians and congregationalists; who all have their platforms or constitutions of church-government.

4. The church-government in this country is founded upon a particular compact or agreement: wherein the officers and members of each particular church combine to set forward the worship of God, and maintain the discipline of his kingdom, in a way which they judge to be agreable to the Holy Scriptures; and to act in way of consociation with other churches of the same principles, for their mutual good and edification. Upon this foundation were the churches of New-England first settled; and for their more regular proceeding therein the platform (expressing their sense of the scripture relating to church order and government) was composed and consented to by the churches in our primitive times: And this form of government is so far established, that our general consent to continue and abide in this way, would secure to us the privileges of it. And this indeed is our only barrier against episcopacy; unless some other form of government (not disallowed by

the crown) be received and embraced by the churches.

5. But if we ſlight the method of government in our platform, and don't by agreement fix on another, it will follow, that either the government of the church muſt ceaſe, or a government impoſed and enforced by human laws muſt ſucceed. I preſume moſt certainly, the churches (ſo unhinged) muſt immediately fall into an abſolute independency at firſt: and the members of each individual church, muſt either be allowed to be under no government but what will ſuit with their own private judgment on the ſcriptures (which they may be tempted to vary or alter as occaſion may offer;) or elſe a power of judging for themſelves as to the meaning of the ſcripture muſt be denied to the brethren, and put over to the miniſter for him to judge and determine as he thinks fit, and to ſtate and fix the boundaries both of his own authority and the people's obedience, as he ſhall from time to time underſtand the ſcripture. And who can tell how much or how often his judgment may alſo vary, upon occaſions or temptations which may offer? But ſuch a confuſed ſtate of things can't laſt long; a more certain and regular form of government will quickly be found neceſſary; and perhaps a preſbyterian government may be ſought after, but not found to be attainable. May it not therefore be proper (before we part with our platform) not only to enquire whether the preſbyterian conſtitution be more agreable to the ſcripture; but alſo whether that government can be ſet up and ſupported here, unleſs ſome other laws than we have hitherto had, be enacted, and do obtain the royal approbation. That the royal approbation may be obtained in favor of the way of the church of England, can't be doubted; but that it will be obtained in favor of a preſbyterian church government here, ſeems hardly probable: which if duly conſidered, it may well be wondered how gentlemen (who would not be willing that themſelves or poſterity ſhould be placed under epiſcopacy) can think of departing from our own platform; at leaſt till another and better be inſtituted in the room thereof.

6. Our platform was doubtleſs the reſult of great tho't and deliberation, and of earneſt prayer and ſupplication; compoſed and conſented to by men of as great learning, piety and prudence as any our age affords; and ſuch as had

more knowledge and larger experience of the ſtate of the church at home and abroad, than perhaps any among us of the preſent age have; and as careful of avoiding human inventions as the beſt of us. Now the platform agreed with their underſtanding of the ſcripture, not only then, but many years after, when it was reviſed by a ſucceeding ſynod. And I am perſwaded, if it were now impartially conſidered and compared with the ſcripture, it would be found very conſonant therewith. And even that part thereof which aſſerts the office of the ruling elder (which is as I ſuppoſe the moſt diſtaſtful, to ſuch as would explode the platform) agrees with the ſcripture not only in the judgment of the divines and churches in New-England in our pureſt times; but alſo in the judgment of the moſt famous reforming divines and churches that have been in other parts of the world. Both the neceſſity and divine authority of that office having been aſſerted by divines vaſtly more in number than thoſe (among preſbyterians and congregationaliſts) who do or have decried it; and not inferior to them in learning, piety or ſolid judgment. I am told by a gentleman of learning and ingenuity, That the proteſtant churches of Geneva, France, Scotland, Holland, and in general almoſt all the churches of the reformation (except epiſcopalians) have uphold this office; and that it has never been denied by any conſiderable number of proteſtant churches (except as aforeſaid) till that about the ſpace of fifty years ago, a number of miniſters roſe up in New-England, who did oppoſe it.

Upon the whole therefore, tho' no man's conſcience ought to be bound by this or any other platform, in any matter which he verily believes to be contrary to the ſcripture; yet it ſeems impoſſible to conceive, how a particular church can uphold an orderly diſcipline, or a number of churches form a conſociation, unleſs they do unite in the foundation-principles of church-government; or that the civil authority preſcribe the rules or canons of church-government, and enforce obedience, and ſubjection thereto, as in the caſe of national churches.

From the foregoing conſiderations laid together, I think it will appear to be the wiſdom and intereſt of all thoſe who prefer our own conſtitution before a national church government, and its forcing canons, ſteadily to adhere to our platform; at leaſt till another and better be found,

and (after mature consideration) consented to and agreed upon by the churches.

And now because the office of a ruling elder is an essential branch of congregational church-government, which if left out, quite alters the constitution, and changes the government of the church into a monarchical form; and because I apprehend that the prejudices that are taken against the platform, are principally upon this head; I would now acquaint your friend (tho' this is further than his request expresses) upon what grounds I satisfy my self respecting the objections I meet with against that office.

1. Whereas it is objected, That the generality of our ministers do not hold this office to be of divine institution: to this objection I oppose the judgment of former divines (more in number, and not less capable of judging as to the meaning of the scriptures;) as also the judgment of several divines now living among us.

2. Whereas 'tis objected, that according to Eph. IV. 8. 11. 12. the ordinary officers left by Christ in the church, are only pastors and teachers; and according to Phil. 1. 1. bishops (or pastors) and deacons are the only officers mentioned: I satisfy my self as to this objection, by considering that the word bishop, pastor and shepherd, signify one and the same thing whenever applied to ecclesiastical officers; and imply a power of teaching, overseeing, feeding and governing. The word pastor is applicable to all rulers whether civil or ecclesiastical, and is so used in scripture; and tho' the word bishop seems in a more appropriated sense to belong to the ecclesiastical ruler; yet under that word so appropriated are comprehended all ecclesiastical rulers, guides, overseers, shepherds; even as the word magistrate comprehends all civil rulers of every rank and station. So that neither of these expressions do exclude any sort of elder, overseer or ruler in the church; but on the contrary do include and comprehend them all. And tho' a power of teaching, overseeing and ruling, may all be attributed to one man; yet it does not follow that the power of overseeing and ruling must lie solely and absolutely in him. For there may be, and is, a government, where there is not a lordly power, or (which is the same thing) power in a single officer, which has no other branch of government to check and controul it.

3. Whereas 'tis objected, That we have not men capable, &c. If it be so indeed, that there are no men in our

churches, that have ſkill enough or integrity enough to guide in the external adminiſtrations of the government and diſcipline of the church; and capable too of aſſiſting, directing, exhorting and comforting their brethren, as they may have opportunity; our degeneracy is very lamentable indeed. Our churches have then none ſuitable for ſervice in eccleſiaſtical councils. Every thing at home and abroad muſt be left to the prudence and fidelity of the miniſters; and wo to that church (if ſuch a thing ſhou'd happen) that falls under the influence of a miniſter no better qualified than themſelves.

4. I find an aſſertion in a late printed pamphlet, that the keys of doctrine and diſcipline were committed to the apoſtles. And again, To be ſure to the ſame perſons is there committed the ruling and feeding of the flock. The author refers to the laſt chapter of Matthew. But would he reſtrain the power of ruling to the perſons of the apoſtles or to the perſons of goſpel miniſters as their ſucceſſors in the work of teaching and baptizing, and to them only; he muſt then either prove the government of the church to be monarchical, or elſe that every church is obliged to provide a number of ſuch teaching elders.

5. Another objection is, That if we will have ruling elders, we muſt provide them a maintainance; and this, ſome ſuppoſe, would fright us out of the notion of ſuch officers. But to me it appears no ways formidable. For in the firſt place, I don't believe that double honor principally intends maintainance (as ſome would have it, from 1 Tim. 5. 17.) and the next words proves no more than this, that a ſuitable reward is due, according to the labour performed. It therefore remains to be proved, that a ruling elder muſt ſpend his whole time in the ſervice of the church, before he is entitled to a maintainance from the church. But if a ſuitable and honorable reward were aſſigned in proportion to their ſervice; I believe no body would have reaſon to complain; and abundance of good might be done, and evil prevented, by their prudent labours, which would take up no great quantity of time. And in extraordinary matters, I ſee no reaſon but their labors ſhould be handſomely rewarded. Submitting the whole to the cenſure of your friend, (unknown to me) I reſt

Your Friend and humble Servant.

JUNE 20, 1732.

A

PLATFORM

OF

CHURCH-DISCIPLINE:

Gathered out of the Word of GOD, and agreed upon by the

ELDERS AND MESSENGERS

Of the CHURCHES assembled in the

SYNOD

At CAMBRIDGE in NEW-ENGLAND;

To be presented to the Churches and General Court, for their Consideration and Acceptance in the Lord, the 8th Month, *Anno* 1648.

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts. PSAL. lxxxiv. 1.

LORD I have loved the Habitation of thy House, and the place where thine Honor dwelleth. PSAL. xxvi. 8.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I will seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple. PSAL. xxvii. 4.

BOSTON:
Printed and Sold by JOHN BOYLES, in Marlborough-Street.
MDCCLXXII.

At a General Court held at BOSTON, May 19, 1680.

THIS court having taken into ſerious conſideration the requeſt that hath been preſented by ſeveral of the reverend elders, in the name of the late SYNOD, do approve thereof, and accordingly order, THE CONFESSION OF FAITH, agreed upon at their ſecond ſeſſion, and, THE PLATFORM OF DISCIPLINE, conſented unto by the Synod at *Cambridge*, Anno 1648, to be printed, for the benefit of the churches in preſent and after times.

EDWARD RAWSON, Sec'ry.

The PREFACE.

THE setting forth of the publick confession of the faith of churches hath a double end, and both tending to public edification: First, the maintenance of the faith intire within itself: Secondly, the holding forth of unity and harmony, both amongst, and with other churches. Our churches here, as (by the grace of Christ) we believe and profess the same doctrine of the truth of the gospel, which generally is received in all the reformed churches of Christ in Europe, so especially we desire not to vary from the doctrine of faith and truth held forth by the churches of our native country. For though it be not one native country that can breed us all of one mind; nor ought we to have the glorious faith of our Lord Jesus with respect to persons, yet as *Paul*, who was himself a Jew, professed to hold forth the doctrine of justification by faith, and of the resurrection of the dead, according as he knew his godly country-men did, who were Jews by nature, (*Gal* 2. 15. *Acts* 26. 6, 7.) so we who are by nature English-men, do desire to hold forth the same doctrine of religion (especially in fundamentals) which we see and know to be held by the churches of *England*, according to the truth of the gospel.

The more we discern (that which we do, and have cause to do with incessant mourning and trembling) the unkind, and unbrotherly, and unchristian contention of our godly brethren and country-men in matters of church government; the more earnestly do we desire to see them join together in one common faith; and ourselves with them. For this end, having perused the public confession of the faith, agreed upon by the reverend assembly of divines at *Westminster*, and finding the sum and substance thereof (in matters of doctrine) to express not their own judgment only, but ours also; and being likewise called upon by our godly magistrates, do draw up a public confession of that faith which is constantly taught, and generally professed amongst us; we thought good to present unto them, and with them to our churches; and with

them to all the churches of Christ abroad, our professed and hearty assent and attestation to the whole confession of faith (for substance of doctrine) which the reverend assembly presented to the religious and honorable parliment of *England*: Excepting only some sections in the 25, 30. & 31. chapters of their confession, which concerns points of controversy in church discipline; touching which we refer ourselves to the draught of church discipline in the ensuing treatise.

The truth of what we here declare, may appear by the unanimous vote of the synod of the elders and messengers of our churches, assembled at *Cambridge*, the last of the sixth month, 1648, which jointly passed in these words; This synod having perused and considered (with much gladness of heart, and thankfulness to God) the confession of faith published of late by the reverend assembly in *England*, do judge it to be very holy, orthodox and judicious in all matters of faith; and do therefore freely and fully consent thereunto, for the substance thereof. Only in those things which have respect to church-government and discipline, we refer ourselves to the platform of church-discipline, agreed upon by this present assembly; and do therefore think it meet, that this confession of faith should be commended to the churches of Christ, and to the honored court, as worthy of their due consideration & acceptance. Howbeit, we may not conceal, that the doctrine of vocation, expressed in chap. 10. sect. 1. and summarily repeated in chap. 13. sect. 1. passed not without some debate. Yet considering the term of vocation, and others by which it is described, are capable of a large, or more strict sense and use, and that it is not intended to bind apprehensions precisely in point of order or method, there hath been a general condescendency thereunto.

Now by this our professed consent and free concurrence with them in all the doctrinals of religion, we hope it may appear to the world, that as we are a remnant of the people of the same nation with them, so we are professors of the same common faith, and fellow-heirs of the same common salvation. Yea moreover, as this our profession of the same faith with them, will exempt us (even in their judgments) from suspicion of heresy; so (we trust) it may exempt us in the like sort from suspicion of schism: that though we are forced to dissent from them in matters of

church-discipline, yet our dissent is not taken up out of arrogancy of spirit in ourselves (whom they see willingly condescend to learn of them) neither is it carried with uncharitable censoriousness towards them, (both which are the proper and essential characters of schism) but in meekness of wisdom, as we walk along with them, and follow them as they follow Christ; so where we conceive a different apprehension of the mind of Christ (as it falleth out in some few points touching church-order) we still reserve due reverence to them (whom we judge to be, through Christ, the glorious lights of both nations) and only crave leave (as in the spirit we are bound) to follow the Lamb whersoever he goeth, and (after the apostles example) as we believe, so we speak.

And if the example of such poor out-casts as ourselves might prevail, if not with all (for that were too great a blessing to hope for) yet with some or other of our brethren in *England*, so far as they are come to mind and speak the same thing with such as dissent from them, we hope in Christ it would not only moderate the harsh judging and condemning of one another in such differences of judgment as may be found in the choicest saints; but also prevent (by the mercy of Christ) the peril of the distraction and destruction of all churches in both kingdoms. Otherwise, if brethren shall go on to bite and devour one another, the apostle feared (as we also with sadness of heart do) it will tend to the consuming of them, and us all: which the Lord prevent.

We are not ignorant, (that besides these aspersions of heresy and schism) other exceptions also are taken at our way of church-government, (but as we conceive) upon as little grounds. As,

1. That by admitting none into the fellowship of our church but saints by calling, we rob many parish churches of their best members, to make up one of our congregations, which is not only to gather churches out of churches, (a thing unheard of in scripture) but also to weaken the hearts and hands of the best ministers in the parishes, by despoiling them of their best hearers.

2. That we provide no course for the gaining and calling in of ignorant, and erroneous, and scandalous persons,

whom we refuse to receive into our churches, and so exclude from the wholsome remedy of church-discipline.

3. That in our way we sow seeds of division, and hindrance of edification in every family; whilst admitting into churches only voluntaries, the husband will be of one church, the wife of another; the parents of one church, the children of another; the master of one church, the servants of another. And so the parents and masters being of different churches from their children and servents, they cannot take a just account of their profiting by what they hear; yea, by this means the husbands, parents and masters shall be chargeable to the maintenance of many other churches, and church-officers, besides their own; which will prove a charge and burthen unsupportable.

But for answer, as to the first; for gathering churches out of churches, we cannot say that it is a thing unheard of in scripture. The first christian church was gathered out of the Jewish church, and out of many synagogues in that church, and consisted partly of the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, and partly of the *Galileans*; who though they kept some communion in some part of publick worship with the temple, yet neither did they frequent the sacrifices, nor repair to the sanhedrim for the determining of their church causes, but kept intire and constant communion with the apostles church in all the ordinances of the gospel. And for the first christian church of the Gentiles at *Antioch*, it appeareth to have been gathered and constituted partly of the dispersed brethren of the church at *Jerusalem* (whereof some were men of *Cyprus* and *Cyrene*) and partly of the believing Gentiles. *Acts*. 11. 20, 21.

If it be said, the first christian church at *Jerusalem*, and that at *Antioch*, were gathered not out of any christian church, but of the Jewish temple and synagogues, which were shortly after to be abolished: and their gathering to *Antioch* was upon occasion of dispersion in time of persecution,

We desire it may be considered, 1. That the members of the Jewish church were more strongly and straitly tied by expres holy covenant, to keep fellowship with the Jewish church till it was abolished, than any members of christian parish churches are wont to be tied to keep fellowship with their parish churches. The episcopal canons, which bind them to attend on their parish church, it is

likely they are now abolished with the episcopacy. The common law of the land is satisfied (as we conceive) if they attend upon the worship of God in any other church, though not within their own parish. But no such like covenant of God, nor any other religious tie lieth upon them to attend the worship of God in their own parish church, as did lie upon the Jews to attend upon the worship of God in their temple and synagogues.

2. Though the Jewish temple church at *Jerusalem* was to be abolished, yet that doth not make the desertion of it by the members to be lawful, till it was abolished. Future abolition is no warrant for present desertion, unless it be lawful, in some case, whilst the church is yet in present standing, to desert it; to wit, either for avoiding present polutions, or for hope of greater edification, and so for better satisfaction to conscience in either. Future events, or foresight of them do not dissolve present relations, else wives, children, servants, might desert their husbands, parents, masters, when they be mortally sick.

3. What the members of the Jewish church did, in joining to the church at *Antioch* in time of persecution, it may well be conceived the members of any christian church may do the like for satisfaction of conscience. Peace of conscience is more desirable than the peace of the outward man; and freedom from scruples of conscience is more comfortable to a sincere heart, than freedom from persecution.

If it be said, these members of the christian church at *Jerusalem* that joined to the church at *Antioch*, removed their habitations together with their relations; which if the brethren of the congregational way would do, it would much abate the grievance of their departure from their presbyterial churches.

We verily could wish them so to do, as well approving the like removal of habitation, in case of changing church relations (provided that it may be done without too much detriment to their outward estates) and we for our parts have done the same. But to put a necessity of removal of habitation in such a case, it is to foment and cherish a corrupt principle of making a civil co-habitation, if not a formal cause, yet at least a proper adjunct of church relation, which the truth of the gospel doth not acknowledge. Now to foment an error to the prejudice of the

truth of the gospel, is not to walk with a right foot, according to the truth of the gospel, as *Paul* judgeth, *Gal.* 2. 1.

4. We do not think it meet or safe, for a member of a presbyterial church forth with to desert his relation to his church, betake himself to the fellowship of a congregational church, though he may discern some defect in the estate or government of his own. For,

1. Faithfulness of brotherly love in church-relation, requireth that the members of the church should first convince their brethren of their sinful defects, and duly wait for their reformation, before they depart from them. For if we must take such a course for the healing of a private brother, in a way of brotherly love, with much meekness and patience; how much more ought we so to walk with like tenderness towards a whole church.

Again, 2. By the hasty departure of sound members from a defective church, reformation is not promoted, but many times retarded, and corruption increased. Whereas on the contrary, while sincere members breathing after purity of reformation abide together, they may (by the blessing of God upon their faithful endeavors prevail much with their elders and neighbours towards a reformation, it may be so much as that their elders in their own church shall receive none to the seals but visible saints; and in the classis shall put forth no authoritative act (but consultative only) touching the members of other churches, not touching their own, but with the consent (silent consent at least) of their own church. Which two things, if they can obtain with any humble, meek, holy, faithful endeavors, we conceive they might (by the grace of Christ) find liberty of conscience to continue their relation with their own presbyterial church without scruple.

5. But to add a word further, touching the gathering of churches out of churches: what if there were no express example of such a thing extant in the scriptures? That which we are wont to answer the antipædo-baptists, may suffice here: It is enough, if any evidence thereof may be gathered from just consequence of scripture-light. Dr. *Ames* his judgment concerning this case passeth (for ought we know) without exception, which he gave in his fourth book of conscience, in answer to two questions, chap. 14. num. 16. If any (saith he) wronged with unjust vexation,

or providing for his own edification, or in testimony against sin, depart from a church, where some evils are tolerated, and join himself to another more pure, yet without condemning of the church he leaveth, he is not therefore to be held as a schismatic, or as guilty of any other sin.

Where the tripartite disjunction which the judicious doctor putteth, declareth the lawfulness of the departure of a church member from his church, when either through weariness of unjust vexation, or in way of provision for his own edification, or in testimony against sin, he joineth himself to another congregation more reformed; any one of these he judgeth a lawful cause of departure, tho' all of them do not concur together. Neither will such a practice despoil the best ministers of the parishes of their best hearers.

For,

1. Sometimes the ministers themselves are willing to join with their better sort of hearers in this way of reformation, and then they and their hearers continue still their church relation together; yea, and confirm it more straitly and strongly, by an express renewed covenant, tho' the ministers may still continue their wonted preaching to the whole parish.

2. If the ministers do dislike the way of those whom they otherwise count their best members, and so refuse to join with them therein; yet if those members can procure some other ministers to join with them in their own way, and still continue their dwelling together in the same town, they may easily order the times of the public assembly, as to attend constantly upon the ministry of their former church, and either after or before the public assembly of the parish, take an opportunity to gather together for the administration of the sacraments and censures, and other church-ordinances amongst themselves. The first apostolic church assembled to hear the word with the Jewish church in the open courts of the temple, but afterwards gathered together for breaking of bread, and other acts of church order, from house to house.

3. Suppose presbyterial churches should communicate some of their best gifted members towards the erecting & gathering another church, it would not forthwith be their detriment, but may be their enlargement. It is the most noble & perfect work of a living creature (both in nature and grace) to propagate and multiply his kind; and it is the honor

of the faithful ſpouſe of Chriſt to ſet forward the work of Chriſt as well abroad as at home. The church in Cant. 8. 8. to help forward her little ſiſter church was willing to part with her choice materials, even beams of cedar, and ſuch precious living ſtones as were fit to build a ſilver palace. In the ſame book the church is ſometimes compared to a garden, ſometimes to an orchard, Cant. 4. 12, 13. No man planteth a garden or orchard, but ſeeketh to get the choiceſt herbs and plants of his neighbours, and they freely impart them; nor do they account it a ſpoil to their garden and orchard, but rather a glory. Nevertheleſs, we go not ſo far, we neither ſeek nor aſk the choice members of the pariſhes, but accept them being offered.

If it be ſaid, They are not offered by the miniſters, nor by the pariſh churches (who have moſt right in them) but only by themſelves,

It may juſtly be demanded, what right or what power have either the miniſters or pariſh church over them? Not by ſolemn church government, for that, tho' it be the firmeſt engagement is not owned, but rejected. If it be their joining with the pariſh in calling and election of a miniſter to ſuch a congregation at his firſt coming, there is indeed juſt weight in ſuch an engagement; nor do we judge it ſafe for ſuch to remove from ſuch a miniſter, unleſs it be upon ſuch grounds as may juſtly give him due ſatisfaction. But if the union of ſuch members to a pariſh-church, and to the miniſtry thereof, be only by co-habitation within the precincts of the pariſh, that union, as it was founded upon human law, ſo by human law it may eaſily be releaſed. Or otherwiſe, if a man remove his habitation, he removeth alſo the bond of his relation, and the ground of offence.

4. It need not be fear'd that all the beſt hearers of the beſt miniſters, no, nor the moſt of them will depart from them upon point of church government. Thoſe who have found the preſence and power of the ſpirit of Chriſt breathing in their miniſters, either to their converſion or edification, will be ſlow to change ſuch a miniſtry of faith and holineſs, for the liberty of church-order. Upon which ground, and ſundry other ſuch like, there be, doubtleſs, ſundry godly and judicious hearers in many pariſhes in England, that do and will prefer their relation to their miniſ-

ters (though in a presbyterial way) above the congregational confederation.

5. But if all, or the most part of the best hearers of the best ministers of parishes should depart from them, as preferring in their judgment, the congregational way, yet in case the congregational way should prove to be of Christ, it will never grieve the holy hearts of godly ministers, that their hearers should follow Christ; yea many of themselves (upon due deliberation) will be ready to go along with them. It never grieved nor troubled *John Baptist* that his disciples departed from him to follow after Christ, John 3. But if the congregational way should prove to be, not the institution of Christ (as we take it) but the invention of men, then doubtless the presbyterial form (if it be of God) will swallow up the other, as Moses's rod devoured the rods of the Egyptians. Nor will this put a necessity upon both the opposite parties to shift for themselves, and seek to supplant one another, but only it will call upon them *(Aletheuein en agape)* to seek and follow the truth in love, to attend in faithfulness each unto his own flock, and to administer to them all the holy things of God, and their portion of food in due season; and as for others, quietly to forbear them, and yet to instruct them with meekness, that are contrary minded, leaving it to Christ (in the use of all good means) to reveal his own truth in his own time, and mean while endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, Phil. 3. 15. 16. Eph. 4. 3.

To the 2d exception, that we take no course for the gaining, and healing, and calling in of ignorant and erroneous persons, whom we refuse to receive into our churches, and so exclude them from the remedy of church-discipline.

We conceive the receiving of them into our churches, would rather lose and corrupt our churches, than gain and heal them. A little leaven laid in a lump of dough, will sooner leaven the whole lump, than the whole lump will sweeten it. We find it therefore safer to square rough and unhewn stones before they be laid into the building, rather than to hammer and hew them when they lie unevenly in the building. And accordingly two means we use to gain and call in such as are ignorant and scandalous.

1. The public ministry of the word, upon which they

are invited by counsel, and required by wholesome laws. And the word it is, which is the power of God to salvation, to the calling and winning of souls.

2. Private conference, and conviction by the elders, and other able brethren of the church, whom they do the more respectively hearken unto, when they see no hope of enjoying church-fellowship, or participation in the sacraments for themselves or their children, till they approve their judgments to be sound and orthodox, and their lives subdued to some hope of a godly conversation. What can classical discipline, or excommunication itself do more in this case.

The third exception wrapeth up in it a three-fold domestical inconvenience, and each of them meet to be eschewed. 1. Dis-union in families between each relation. 2. Disappointment of edification, for want of opportunity in the governors of families to take account of things heard by their children and servants. 3. Disbursements of chargeable maintenance to the several churches, whereunto the several persons of their families are joined.

All which inconveniencies either do not fall out in congregational churches, or are easily redressed; for none are orderly admitted into congregational churches, but such as are well approved by good testimony to be duly observant of family-relation: or if any otherwise disposed should creep in, they are either orderly healed, or duly removed in a way of Christ. Nor are they admitted, unless they can give some good account of their profiting by ordinances, before the elders and brethren of the church, and much more to their parents and masters. Godly tutors in the university can take an account of their pupils; and godly housholders in the city can take an account of their children and servants, how they profit by the word they have heard in several churches, and that to the greater edification of the whole family, by the variety of such administrations. Bees may bring more honey and wax into the hive, when they are not limited to one garden of flowers, but may fly abroad to many.

Nor is any charge expected from wives, children or servants to the maintenance of congregational churches, further than they be furnished with personal estates or livings, which may enable them to contribute of such things as they have; and not of such things as they

have not. God accepteth not robbery for a sacrifice. And though a godly housholder may justly take himself bound in conscience to contribute to any such church, whereto his wife, or children, or servants do stand in relation, yet that will not aggravate the burthen of his charge no more than if they were received members of the same church whereto himself is related.

But why do we stand thus long to plead exemptions from exception? The Lord help all his faithful servants (whether presbyterial or congregational) to judge and shame ourselves before the Lord, for all our former compliances to greater enormities in church government, than are to be found either in the congregational or presbyterial way; and then surely either the Lord will clear up his own will to us, and so frame and subdue us all to one mind and one way, (Ezek. 43. 10. 11.) or else we shall learn to bear one anothers burthens in a spirit of meekness. It will then doubtless be far from us, so to attest the discipline of Christ, as to detest the disciples of Christ: so to contend for the seamless coat of Christ, as to crucify the living members of Christ; so to divide ourselves about church-communion, as thro' breaches to open a wide gap for a deluge of anti-christian, and profane malignity to swallow up both church and civil state.

What shall we say more? Is difference of church order become the in-let of all the disorders in the kingdom? Hath the Lord indeed left us to such hardness of heart, that church-government shall become a snare to Zion (as sometimes Moses was to Egypt, Exod. 20. 7.) that we cannot leave contesting and contending about it, till the kingdom be destroyed? Did not the Lord Jesus, when he dedicated his sufferings for his church, and his also unto his father, make it his earnest and only prayer for us in this world, that we all might be one in him? Joh. 17. 20, 21, 22, 23. And it is possible that he (whom the Father heard always, Joh. 11. 42.) should not have this last most solemn prayer heard and granted? Or shall it be granted for all the saints elsewhere, and not for the saints in England, so that amongst them dis-union shall grow

even about church union and communion? If it be possible for a little faith (so much as a grain of mustard-seed) to remove a mountain, is it not possible for so much strength of faith as it is, to be found in all the godly in the kingdom, to remove those images of jealousy, and to cast those stumbling blocks out of the way, which may hinder the free passage of brotherly love amongst brethren? It's true indeed, the national covenant doth justly engage both parties faithfully to endeavor the utter extirpation of the antichristian hierarchy; and much more of all blasphemies, heresies and errors. Certainly, if congregational discipline be independent, from the inventions of men is it not much more independent from the delusions of satan? What fellowship hath Christ with beliel? Light with darkness? Truth with error? The faithful Jews needed not the help of the Samaritans, to re-edify the temple of God; yea, they rejected their help when it was offered, Ezra. 4. 1, 2, 3. And if the congregational way be a way of truth (as we believe) and if the brethren that walk in it be zealous of the truth, and hate every false way (as by the rule of their holy discipline they are instructed, 2 Joh. 10. 11.) then verily there is no branch in the national covenant, that engageth the covenanters to abhor either the congregational churches or their way; which being duly administred, do no less effectually extirpate the anti-christian hierarchy, and all blasphemies, heresies, and pernicious errors, than the other way of discipline doth, which is more generally and publickly received and ratified.

But the Lord Jesus commune with all our hearts in secret, and he who is the king of his church, let him be pleased to exercise his kingly power in out spirits, that so his kingdom may come into our churches in purity and peace, AMEN.

END OF THE PREFACE.

CHAP. I.

Of the form of church government; and that it is one, immutable, and prescribed in the word.

ECclesiastical polity, or church government or discipline, is nothing else but that form and order that is to be observed in the church of Christ upon earth, both for the constitution of it, and all the administrations that therein are to be performed. Ezek. 43. 11. Col. 2. 5. 1 Tim. 3. 15.

2. Church government is considered in a double respect, either in regard of the parts of government themselves, or necessary circumstances thereof. The parts of government are prescribed in the word, because the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and lawgiver of his church, is no less faithful in the house of God than was Moses, who from the Lord delivered a form and pattern of government to the children of Israel in the old Testament; and the holy scriptures are now also so perfect, as that they are able to make the man of God perfect, and throughly furnished unto every good work; and therefore doubtless to the well ordering of the house of God. Heb. 3. 5, 6. Exod. 25. 40. 2 Tim. 3. 16.

3. The parts of church-government, are all of them exactly described in the word of God, being parts or means of instituted worship, according to the second commandment and therefore to continue one and the same unto the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, as a kingdom that cannot be shaken, until he shall deliver it up unto God, even to the father. So that it is not left in the power of men, officers, churches, or any state in the world to add or diminish, or alter any thing in the least measure therein. 1 Tim. 3. 15. 1 Chron. 15. 13. Exod 20. 4. 1 Tim. 6. 13, 16. Heb. 12. 27, 28. 1 Cor. 15. 24. Deut. 12. 32.

4. The necessary circumstances, as time and place, &c. belonging unto order and decency, are not so left unto men, as that under pretence of them they may thrust their own inventions upon the churches, being circumscribed in the word with many general limitations, where they are determined in respect of the matter, to be neither worship

it self, nor circumstances separable from worship. In respect of their end they must be done unto edification. In respect of the manner, decently and in order, according to the nature of the things themselves, and civil and church custom. Doth not even nature it self teach you? Yea, they are in some sort determined particularly, namely, that they be done in such a manner, as all circumstances considered, is most expedient for edification: So, as if there be no error of man concerning their determination, the determining of them is to be accounted as if it were divine. Ezek. 43. 8. 1 Kings 12. 31, 32, 33. 2 Kings 12. Exod. 20. 19. Isa. 28. 13. Col. 1. 22, 23. Acts 15. 28. Mat. 15. 9. 1 Cor. 11. 28. and 8. 34. 1 Cor. 14. 26. and 14. 40. and 11. 14. 16. and 14. 12. 19. Acts 15. 28.

CHAP. II.

Of the nature of the catholic church in general, and in special of a particular visible church.

THE catholic church is the whole company of those that are elected, redeemed, and in time effectually called from the state of sin and death, unto a state of grace and salvation in Jesus Christ, Eph. 1. 22, 23. and 5. 25, 26, 30.

2. This church is either triumphant or militant. Triumphant, the number of them who are glorified in heaven: Militant, the number of them who are conflicting with their enemies upon earth. Heb. 12, 23. Rom. 8. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 12. and 4. 8. Eph. 6. 12, 13.

3. This militant church is to be considered as invisible, and visible. Invisible, in respect of their relation wherein they stand to Christ, as a body unto the head, being united unto him by the spirit of God, and faith in their hearts. Visible, in respect of the profession of their faith, in their persons and in particular churches. And so there may be acknowledged an universal visible church. 2 Tim. 2. 19. Rev. 2. 17. 1 Cor. 6. 17. Eph. 3. 17. Rom. 1. 8. 1 Thess. 1. 8. Isa. 2. 2. 1 Tim. 6. 12.

4. The members of the visible militant church considered either as not yet in church order, or walking accord-

ing to the church order of the gospel. In order, and so besides the spiritual union and communion common to believers, they enjoy moreover an union and communion ecclesiastical-political. So we deny an universal visible church. Acts 19. 1. Col. 2. 5. Mat. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 12.

5. The state of the members of the militant visible church walking in order, was either before the law, œconomical, that is in families; or under the law national; or since the coming of Christ, only congregational. (The term independent we approve not.) Therefore neither national, provincial nor classical. Gen. 18. 19, Exod. 19. 6.

6. A congregational church is by the institution of Christ a part of the militant visible church, consisting of a company of saints by calling, united into one body by an holy covenant, for the public worship of God, and the mutual edification one of another, in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. 14. 23, 36. and 1. 2. and 12. 27. Exod. 19. 5. 6. Deut. 29. 1. and 9 to 15. Acts 2. 42. 1 Cor. 14. 26.

CHAP. III.

Of the matter of the visible church, both in respect of quality and quantity.

THE matter of a visible church are saints by calling. 1 Cor. 1. 2. Eph. 1. 1.

2. By saints, we understand, 1. Such as have not only attained the knowledge of the principles of religion, and are free from gross and open scandals, but also do together with the profession of their faith and repentance, walk in blameless obedience to the word, so as that in charitable discretion they may be accounted saints by calling, (though perhaps some or more of them be unsound and hypocrites inwardly) because the members of such particular churches are commonly by the Holy Ghost called saints & faithful brethren in Christ; and sundry churches have been reproved for receiving and suffering such persons to continue in fellowship amongst them, as have been offensive and scandalous; the name of God also by this means is

blaſphemed, and the holy things of God defiled and profaned, the hearts of the godly grieved, and the wicked themſelves hardened, and holpen forward to damnation. The example of ſuch doth endanger the ſanctity of others: A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. 2. The children of ſuch, who are alſo holy. Heb. 6. 1. 1 Cor. 1. 5. Rom. 6. 17. 1 Cor. 1. 2. Phil. 1. 2. Col. 1. 2. Eph. 1. 1. 1 Cor. 5. 12, 13. Rev. 2. 14. 15, 20. Ezek. 44. 7, 9, and 23. 38, 39. Num. 19. 20. Hag. 2. 13, 14. 1 Cor. 11. 27. 29. Pſal. 37. 21. 1 Cor. 5. 6. 2 Cor. 7. 14.

3. The members of churches, though orderly conſtituted, may in time degenerate, and grow corrupt and ſcandalous, which though they ought not to be tolerated in the church, yet their continuance therein, through the defect of the execution of diſcipline and juſt cenſures, doth not immediately diſſolve the being of a church, as appears in the church of Iſrael, and the churches of Galatia and Corinth, Pergamus and Thyatira. Jer. 2. 21. 1 Cor. 5. 12. Jer. 2. 4. Gal. 5. 4. 2 Cor. 12. 21. Rev. 2. 14, 15. and 21. 21.

4. The matter of the church in reſpect of its quantity, ought not to be of greater number than may ordinarily meet together conveniently in one place; nor ordinarily fewer, than may conveniently carry on church-work. Hence when the holy ſcripture makes mention of the ſaints combined into a church eſtate, in a town or city where was but one congregation, it uſually calleth thoſe ſaints (the church) in the ſingular number; as, the church of the Theſſalonians; the church of Smyrna, Philadelphia, and the like: But when it ſpeaketh of the ſaints in a nation or province, wherein there were ſundry congregations, it frequently and uſually calleth them by the name of churches, in the plural number, as the churches of Aſia, Galatia, Macedonia, and the like; which is further confirmed by what is written of ſundry of thoſe churches in particular, how they were aſſembled and met together, the whole church in one place, as the church at Jeruſalem, the church at Antioch, the church at Corinth, and Cenchrea, though it were more near to Corinth, it being the port thereof, and anſwerable to a village, yet being a diſtinct congregation from Corinth, it had a church of its own, as well as Corinth had. 1 Cor. 14. 21. Mat. 18. 17. Rom.

16. 1. 1 Theſſ. 1. 1. Rev. 2. 8. and 3. 7. 1 Cor. 16. 1, 19. Gal. 1. 2. 2 Cor. 8. 1. 1 Theſſ. 2. 14. Acts 2. 46. and 5. 12. and 6. 2. and 14. 27. and 15. 38. 1 Cor. 5. 4. and 14. 23. Rom. 16. 1.

5. Nor can it with reaſon be thought but that every church appointed and ordained by Chriſt, had a miniſtry ordained and appointed for the ſame; and yet plain it is, that there were no ordinary officers appointed by Chriſt for any other than congregational churches; elders being appointed to feed, not all flocks, but the particular flock of God, over which the Holy Ghoſt had made them overſeers, and that flock they muſt attend, even the whole flock; and one congregation being as much as any ordinary elder can attend, therefore there is no greater church than a congregation, which may ordinarily meet in one place. Acts 20. 28.

CHAP. IV.

Of the form of a viſible church, and of church-covenant.

SAINTS by calling muſt have a viſible political union among themſelves, or elſe they are not yet a particular church, as thoſe ſimilitudes hold forth, which the ſcripture makes uſe of to ſhew the nature of particular churches, as a body, a building, houſe, hands, eyes, feet, and other members muſt be united, or elſe (remaining ſeparate) are not a body. Stones, timber, though ſquared, hewn and poliſhed, are not a houſe, until they are compacted and united; ſo ſaints or believers in judgment of charity, are not a church, unleſs orderly knit together. 1 Cor. 12. 27. 1 Tim. 3. 15. Eph. 2. 22. 1 Cor. 12. 15, 16, 17, Rev. 1.

2. Particular churches cannot be diſtinguiſhed one from another, but by their forms: *Epheſus* is not *Smyrna*, nor *Pergamus Thyatira*, but each one a diſtinct ſociety of itſelf, having officers of their own, which had not the charge of others; virtues of their own, for which others are not praiſed; corruptions of their own, for which others are not blamed.

3. This form is a viſible covenant, agreement or conſent, whereby they give up themſelves unto the Lord, to the obſerving of the ordinances of Chriſt together in the

fame ſociety, which is uſually called the church covenant: For we ſee not otherwiſe how members can have church power one over another mutually. The comparing of each particular church to a city, and unto a ſpouſe, ſeemeth to conclude not only a form, but that form is by way of covenant. The covenant, as it was that which made the family of Abraham, and children of Iſrael to be a church and people unto God, ſo it is that which now makes the ſeveral ſocieties of Gentile believers to be churches in theſe days. Exod. 19. 5, 8. Deut. 29. 12, 13. Zech. 11. 14. and 9. 11. Eph. 2. 19. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Gen. 17. 7. Deut. 29. 12, 13. Eph. 2. 12, 18.

4. This voluntary agreement, conſent, or covenant, (for all theſe are taken here for the ſame) altho' the more expreſs and plain it is, the more fully it puts us in mind of our mutual duty, and ſtirreth us up to it, and leaveth leſs room for the queſtioning of the truth of the church eſtate of a company of profeſſors, and the truth of member-ſhip of particular perſons; yet we conceive the ſubſtance of it is kept, where there is a real agreement and conſent of a company of faithful perſons to meet conſtantly together in one congregation, for the public worſhip of God, and their mutual edification; which real agreement and conſent they do expreſs by their conſtant practice in coming together for the publick worſhip of God, and by their religious ſubjection to the ordinances of God there; the rather if we conſider how ſcripture-covenants have been entred into, not only expreſsly by word of mouth, but by ſacrifice, by hand-writing and ſeal, and alſo ſometimes by ſilent conſent, without any writing or expreſſion of words at all. Exod. 19. 5. and 20. 8 and 24. 3. 17. Joſh. 24. 18 to 24. Pſal. 50. 5. Neh. 9. 3, 8 and 10. 1. Gen. 17. Deut. 29.

5. This form being by mutual covenant, it followeth, it is not faith in the heart, nor the profeſſion of that faith, nor co-habitation, nor baptiſm. 1. Not faith in the heart, becauſe that is inviſible. 2. Not a bare profeſſion, becauſe that declareth them no more to be members of one church than another. 3. Not co-habitation; atheiſts or infidels may dwell together with believers. 4. Not baptiſm, becauſe it pre-ſuppoſeth a church eſtate, as circumciſion in the old teſtament, which gave no being to the church, the church being before it, and in the wilderneſs

without it. Seals pre-ſuppoſe a covenant already in being. One perſon is a compleat ſubject of baptiſm, but one perſon is uncapable of being a church.

6. All believers ought, as God giveth them opportunity thereunto, to endeavour to join themſelves unto a particular church, and that in reſpect of the honor of Jeſus Chriſt, in his example and inſtitution, by the profeſſed acknowledgement of, and ſubjection unto the order and ordinances of the goſpel; as alſo in reſpect of their good of communion, founded upon their viſible union, and contained in the promiſes of Chriſt's ſpecial preſence in the church; whence they have fellowſhip with him, and in him one with another; alſo, for the keeping of them in the way of God's commandments, and recovering of them in caſe of wandering (which all Chriſt's ſheep are ſubject to in this life) being unable to return of themſelves; together with the benefit of their mutual edification, and of their poſterity, that they may not be cut off from the privileges of the covenant. Otherwiſe if a believer offends, he remains diſtitute of the remedy provided in that behalf. And ſhould all believers neglect this duty of joining to all particular congregations, it might follow thereupon, that Chriſt ſhould have no viſible political churches upon earth. Acts 2. 24. and 9. 26. Mat. 3. 13, 14, 15. and 28, 29, 30. Pſal. 123. 2. 3. and 87. 7. Mat. 18. 20. 1 John 1. 3. Pſal. 119. 176. 1 Pet. 2. 25. Eph. 4. 16. Joh. 22. 24, 25. Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17.

CHAP. V.

Of the firſt ſubject of church power, or, to whom church power doth firſt belong.

THE firſt ſubject of church power, is eitheir ſupreme or ſubordinate and miniſterial: The ſupreme (by way of gift from the father) is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: The miniſterial is either extraordinary as the apoſtles, prophets and evangeliſts; or ordinary, as every particular congregational church. Mat. 18. 18. Rev. 3. 7. Iſa. 9. 6. John 20. 21. 23. 1 Cor. 14. 32. Tit. 1. 5. 1 Cor. 5. 12.

2. Ordinary church-power, is either the power of office, that is, ſuch as is proper to the elderſhip, or power of pri-

vilege, such as belongs to the brotherhood. The latter is in the brethren formally, and immediately from Christ, that is, so as it may be acted or exercised immediately by themselves; the former is not in them formally or immediately, and therefore cannot be acted or exercised immediately by them, but is said to be in them, in that they design the persons unto office, who only are to act, or to exercise this power. Rom. 12. 4. 8. Acts 1. 2, 3, and 6, 3, 4, and 14. 23. 1 Cor. 10. 29, 30.

CHAP. VI.

Of the officers of the church, and especially of pastors and teachers.

A Church being a company of people combined together by covenant, for the worship of God, it appeareth thereby, there may be the essence and being of a church without any officers, seeing there is both the form and matter of a church; which is implied when it is said, The apostles ordained elders in every church, Acts 14. 23.

2. Nevertheless, though officers be not absolutely necessary to the simple being of churches, when they be called, yet ordinarily to their calling, they are, and to their well-being; and therefore the Lord Jesus, out of his tender compassion, hath appointed and ordained officers, which he would not have done, if they had not been useful and needful for the church; yea, being ascended into heaven, he received gifts for men, and gave gifts to men, whereof officers for the church are justly accounted no small parts, they being to continue to the end of the world, and for the perfecting of all the saints. Rom. 10. 17. Jer. 3. 15. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Eph. 4. 11. Psal. 68. 18. Eph. 4. 8, 11, and 4. 12, 13.

3. These officers were either extraordinary or ordinary: Extraordinary, as apostles, prophets, evangelists; ordinary, as elders and deacons. The apostles, prophets and evangelists as they were called extraordinarily by Christ, so their office ended with themselves. Whence it is that Paul directing Timothy how to carry along church administrations, giveth no direction about the choice or course of apostles, prophets or evangelists, but only of elders and deacons; and when Paul was to take his last leave

of the church of Epheſus, he committed the care of feeding the church to no other but unto the elders of that church. The like charge doth Peter commit to the elders. 1. Cor. 12. 28. Eph. 4. 11. Acts 8. 6, 16, 19. and 11. 28. Rom. 11. 13. 1 Cor. 4. 9. 1 Tim. 3. 1, 2, 8 to 13. Tit. 1. 8. Acts 20. 17, 28. 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2, 3.

4. Of elders (who are alſo in ſcripture called biſhops) ſome attend chiefly to the miniſtry of the word, as the paſtors and teachers; others attend eſpecially unto rule, who are therefore called ruling elders. 1 Tim. 2. 3. Phil. 1. 1. Acts 20. 17, 28. 1 Tim. 5. 17.

5. The office of paſtor and teacher, appears to be diſtinct. The paſtors ſpecial work is, to attend to exhortation, and therein to adminiſter a word of wiſdom: The teacher is to attend to doctrine, and therein to adminiſter a word of knowledge: And either of them to adminiſter the ſeals of that covenant, unto the diſpenſation whereof they are alike called; as alſo to execute the cenſures, being but a kind of application of the word: The preaching of which, together with the application thereof, they are alike charged withal. Eph. 4. 11. Rom. 12. 7. 8. 1 Cor. 12. 8. 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. Tit. 1. 9.

6. And foraſmuch as both paſtors and teachers are given by Chriſt for the perfecting of the ſaints, and edifying of his body; which ſaints and body of Chriſt is his church; And therefore we account paſtors and teachers to be both of them church officers, and not the paſtor for the church, and the teacher only for the ſchools; Tho' this we gladly acknowledge, that ſchools are both lawful, profitble and neceſſary for the training up of ſuch in good literature or learning, as may afterwards be called forth unto office of paſtor or teacher in the church. Eph. 4. 11, 12. and 1. 22, 23. 1 Sam. 10. 12, 19. 20. 2 Kings 2. 3, 15.

CHAP. VII.

Of ruling elders and deacons.

THE ruling elders office is diſtinct from the office of paſtor and teacher. The ruling elders are not ſo called, to exclude the paſtors and teachers from ruling, becauſe ruling and governing is common to theſe

with the other, whereas attending to teach and preach the word is peculiar unto the former. Rom. 12. 7, 8, 9. 1 Tim. 5. 17. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Heb. 13. 17. 1 Tim. 5. 17.

2. The ruling elders work is to join with the paſtor and teacher in thoſe acts of ſpiritual rule, which are diſtinct from the miniſtry of the word and ſacraments committed to them. Of which ſort theſe be as followeth: 1. To open and ſhut the doors of God's houſe by the admiſſion of members approved by the church; by ordination of officers choſen by the church, and by excommunication of notorious and obſtinate offenders renounced by the church, and by reſtoring of penitents forgiven by the church. 2. To call the church together when there is occaſion, and ſeaſonably to diſmiſs them again. 3. To prepare matters in private, that in public they may be carried to an end with leſs trouble, and more ſpeedy diſpatch. 4. To moderate the carriage of all matters in the church aſſembled; as, to propound matters to the church, to order the ſeaſon of ſpeech and ſilence, and to pronounce ſentence according to the mind of Chriſt, with the conſent of the church.

5. To be guides and leaders to the church, in all matters whatſoever pertaining to church adminiſtrations and actions. 6. To ſee that none in the church live inordinately, out of rank and place, without a calling, or idly in their calling. 7. To prevent and heal ſuch offences in life or in doctrine, as might corrupt the church. 8. To feed the flock of God with a word of admonition. 9. And as they ſhall be ſent for, to viſit and pray over their ſick brethren. 10. And at other times as opportunity ſhall ſerve thereunto. 1 Tim. 5. 17. 2 Chron. 23. 19. Rev. 21. 21. 1 Tim. 4. 14. Mat. 28. 17. 2 Cor. 2. 7. 8. Acts 21. 18, 22, 23. and 6. 2, 3. and 13. 15. 2 Cor. 8. 19. Heb. 13. 7, 17. 2 Theſſ. 2. 10. 11, 12. Acts 20. 28, 32. 1 Theſſ. 5. 12. James 5. 14. Acts. 20. 20.

3. The office of a deacon is inſtituted in the church by the Lord Jeſus; ſometimes they are called helps. The ſcripture telleth us how they ſhould be qualified, ---------- "Grace, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not given to filthy lucre." ---------- They muſt firſt be proved and then uſe the office of a deacon, being found blameleſs. The office and work of a deacon, is to receive

the offerings of the church, gifts given to the church, and to keep the treasury of the church, and therewith to serve the tables, which the church is to provide for; as the Lord's table, the table of the ministers, and of such as are in necessity, to whom they are to distribute in simplicity. Acts 6. 3. Phil. 1. 1. 1 Tim. 3. 8. 1 Cor. 12. 28. 1 Tim. 3. 8, 9. Acts 4. 35. and 6. 2, 3. Rom. 12. 8.

4. The office therefore being limited unto the care of the temporal good things of the church, it extends not to the attendance upon, and administration of the spiritual things thereof, as the word and sacraments, or the like. 1 Cor. 7. 17.

5. The ordinance of the apostle, and practice of the church, commends the Lord's day as a fit time for the contribution of the saints. 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2, 3.

6. The instituting of all these officers in the church, is the work of God himself, of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the Holy Ghost; and therefore such officers as he hath not appointed, are altogether unlawful either to be placed in the church, or to be retained therein, and are to be looked at as human creatures, meer inventions and appointments of men, to the great dishonor of Christ Jesus the Lord of his house, the king of his church, whether popes, patriarchs, cardinals, arch-bishops, lord-bishops, arch-deacons, officials, commissaries, and the like. These and the rest of that hierarchy and retinue, not being plants of the Lord's planting, shall be all certainly rooted out and cast forth. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Eph. 4. 8, 11. Acts 20. 28. Mat. 15. 13.

7. The Lord hath appointed ancient widows (where they may be had) to minister in the church, in giving attendance to the sick, and to give succour unto them, and others in the like necessities. 1 Tim. 5. 9, 10.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the election of church officers.

NO man may take the honor of a church officer unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Heb. 5. 4.

2. Calling unto office is either immediate, by Christ himself, such was the call of the apostles and prophets,

this manner of calling ended with them as hath been said: Or mediate, by the church. Gal. 1. 1. Acts 14. 23. and 6. 3.

3. It is meet that before any be ordained, or chosen officers, they should be first tried and proved, because hands are not suddenly to be laid upon any, and both elders and deacons must be of honest and good report. 1 Tim. 5. 22. and 7. 10. Acts 16. 2. and 6. 3.

4. The things in respect of which they are to be tried, are those gifts and virtues which the scripture requireth in men that are to be elected into such places, viz. that the elders must be blameless, sober, apt to teach, and endued with such other qualifications as are laid down, 1 Tim. 3. 2. Tit. 1. 6 to 9. Deacons to be fitted as is directed, Acts 6. 3. 1 Tim. 3. 8 to 11.

5. Officers are to be called by such churches whereunto they are to minister. Of such moment is the preservation of this power, that the churches exercised it in the presence of the apostles. Acts 14. 23. and 1. 23. and 6. 3, 4, 5.

6. A church being free, cannot become subject to any, but by a free election; yet when such a people do chuse any to be over them in the Lord, then do they become subject, and most willingly submit to their ministry in the Lord, whom they have so chosen. Gal. 5. 13. Heb. 13. 17.

7. And if the church have power to chuse their officers and ministers, then in case of manifest unworthiness and delinquency, they have power also to depose them: for, to open and shut, to chuse and refuse, to constitute in office, and remove from office, are acts belonging to the same power. Rom. 16. 17.

8. We judge it much conducing to the well-being and communion of churches, that where it may conveniently be done, neighbour churches be advised withal, and their help be made use of in the trial of church-officers, in order to their choice, Cant. 8. 8, 9.

9. The choice of such church-officers belongeth not to the civil magistrates, as such, or diocesan-bishops, or patrons; for of these, or any such-like, the scripture is wholly silent, as having any power therein.

CHAP. IX.

Of ordination, and impoſition of hands.

CHURCH officers are not only to be choſen by the church, but alſo to be ordained by impoſition of hands and prayer, with which at the ordination of elders, faſting alſo is to be joined. Acts 13. 3. and 14. 23. 1 Tim. 5. 22.

2. This ordination we account nothing elſe but the ſolemn putting a man into his place and office in the church, whereunto he had right before by election; being like the inſtalling of a magiſtrate in the common wealth. Ordination therefore is not to go before but to follow election. The eſſence and ſubſtance of the outward calling of an ordinary officer in the church, doth not conſiſt in his ordination, but in his voluntary and free election by the church, and his accepting of that election; whereupon is founded that relation between paſtor and flock, between ſuch a miniſter and ſuch a people. Ordination doth not conſtitute an officer, nor give him the eſſentials of his office. The apoſtles were elders without impoſition of hands by men; Paul and Barnabas were officers before that impoſition of hands, Acts 13. 3. The poſterity of Levi were prieſts and levites, before hands were laid on them by the children of Iſrael. Numb. 8. 10. Acts 6. 5, 6. and 13. 2. 3. and 14. 23. 1 Tim. 4. 14. 1 Tim. 5. 22.

3. In ſuch churches where there are elders, impoſition of hands in ordination, is to be performed by thoſe elders.

4. In ſuch churches where there are no elders, impoſition of hands may be performed by ſome of the brethren orderly choſen by the church thereunto. For if the people may elect officers, which is the greater, and wherein the ſubſtance of the office doth conſiſt, they may much more (occaſion and need ſo requiring) impoſe hands in ordination, which is leſs, and but the accompliſhment of the other. Numb. 8. 10.

5. Nevertheleſs, in ſuch churches where there are no elders, and the church ſo deſire, we ſee not why impoſition of hands may not be performed by the elders of other churches. Ordinary officers laid hands upon the officers

of many churches: The presbytery at Ephesus laid hands upon Timothy, an evangelist; the presbytery at Antioch laid hands upon Paul and Barnabas. 1 Tim. 4. 14. Acts 13. 3.

6. Church officers are officers to one church, even that particular church over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers. Insomuch as elders are commanded to feed, not all flocks, but that flock which is committed to their faith and trust, and dependeth upon them. Nor can constant residence at one congregation be necessary for a minister, no, nor yet lawful, if he be not a minister to one congregation only, but to the church universal; because he may not attend one part only of the church to which he is a minister, but he is called to attend unto all the flock. 1 Pet. 5. 2. Acts 20. 28.

7. He that is clearly loosed from his office relation unto the church whereof he was a minister, cannot be looked at as an officer, nor perform any act of office in any other church, unless he be again orderly called unto office; which when it shall be, we know nothing to hinder, but imposition of hands also in his ordination ought to be used towards him again. For so Paul the apostle received imposition of hands twice at least from Annanias. Acts 9. 17. and 13. 3.

CHAP. X.

Of the power of the church, and its presbytery.

SUPREAM and lordly power over all the churches upon earth doth only belong unto Jesus Christ, who is king of the church, and the head thereof. He hath the government upon his shoulders, and hath all power given to him both in heaven and earth. Psal. 2. 6. Eph. 1. 21, 22. Isa. 9. 6. Matt. 28. 18.

2. A company of professed believers ecclesiastically confederate, as they are a church, before they have officers, and without them; so even in that estate, subordinate church power, under Christ, delegated to them by him, doth belong to them in such a manner as is before expressed, chap. 5. sect. 2. and as flowing from the very nature and essence of a church: It being natural to all bodies, and so unto a church body, to be furnished with sufficient power for its own preservation and subsistence. Acts 1. 23. and 14. 23. and 6. 3, 4. Mat. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 4. 5.

3. This government of the church is a mixt government, (and so hath been acknowledged long before the term of independency was heard of) in respect of Christ, the head and king of the church, and the sovereign power residing in him, and exercised by him, it is a monarchy; in respect of the body or brotherhood of the church, and power from Christ granted unto them, it resembles a democracy; in respect of the presbytery, and power committed unto them, it is an aristocracy. Rev. 3. 7. 1 Cor. 5. 12. 1 Tim. 5. 27.

4. The sovereign power which is peculiar unto Christ, is exercised. 1. In calling the church out of the world unto holy fellowship with himself. 2. In instituting the ordinances of his worship, and appointing his ministers and officers for the dispensing of them. 3. In giving laws for the ordering of all our ways, and the ways of his house. 4. In giving power and life to all his institutions, and to his people by them. 5. In protecting and delivering his church against and from all the enemies of their peace. Gal. 1. 4. Rev. 5. 8, 9. Mat. 28. 20. Eph. 4. 8, 11. Jam. 4. 12. Isa. 33. 22. 1 Tim. 3. 15. 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. Isa. 32. 2. Luke 17. 1.

5. The power granted by Christ unto the body of the church and brotherhood, is a prerogative or privilege which the church doth exercise. 1. In chusing their own officers, whether elders or deacons. 2. In admission of their own members, and therefore there is great reason they should have power to remove any from their fellowship again. Hence in case of offence, any brother hath power to convince and admonish an offending brother; and in case of not hearing him, to take one or two more to set on the admonition; and in case of not hearing them, to proceed to tell the church; and as his offence may require, the whole church hath power to proceed to the censure of him, whether by admonition or excommunication; and upon his repentance, to restore him again unto his former communion. Acts 3, 5. and 14. 23. and 9. 26. Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17. Tit. 3. 10. Col. 4. 17. 2 Cor. 2. 7, 8.

6. In case an elder offend incorrigibly, the matter so requiring, as the church had power to call him to office, so they have power according to order (the council of other churches, where it may be had, directing thereto) to remove him from his office; and being now but a member, in case he add contumacy to his sin, the church that had power to receive him into their fellowship, hath the same power to cast him out, that they have concerning any other member. Col. 4. 17. Rom. 16. 17. Mat. 18. 17.

7. Church government or rule, is placed by Christ in the officers of the church, who are therefore called rulers, while they rule with God; yet in case of male administration, they are subject to the power of the church, as hath been said before. The Holy Ghost frequently, yea always, where it mentioneth church rule, and church government, ascribeth it to elders; whereas the work and duty of the people is expressed in the phrase of obeying their elders, and submitting themselves unto them in the Lord. So as it is manifest, that an organic or compleat church is a body politic, consisting of some that are governors, and some that are governed in the Lord. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Heb. 13. 17. 1 Thess. 5. 12. Rom. 12. 8. 1 Tim. 5. 17. 1 Cor. 12. 28, 29. Heb. 13. 7, 17.

8. The power which Christ has committed to the elders, is to feed and rule the church of God, and accordingly to call the church together upon any weighty occasion; when the members, so called, without a just cause, may not refuse to come, nor when they are come, depart before they are dismiss'd, nor speak in the church before they have leave from the elders; nor continue so doing when they require silence; nor may they oppose nor contradict the judgment or sentence of the elders, without sufficient and weighty cause, because such practices are manifestly contrary unto order and government, and in-lets of disturbances, and tend to confusion. Acts 20. 28. and 6. 2. Num. 16. 12. Ezek. 46. 10. Acts 13. 15. Hos. 4. 4.

9. It belongs also unto the elders to examine any officers or members before they be received of the church; to receive the accusations brought to the church, and to prepare them for the churches hearing. In handling of offences, and other matters before the church, they have

power to declare and publish the counsel and will of God, touching the same, and to pronounce sentence with consent of the church. Lastly, They have power, when they dismiss the people, to bless them in the name of the Lord. Rev. 2. 2. 1 Tim. 5. 19. Acts 21. 18, 22, 23. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. Numb. 6. 23 to 26.

10. This power of government in the elders doth not any wise prejudice the power of privilege in the brotherhood; as neither the power of privilege in the brethren doth prejudice the power of government in the elders, but they may sweetly agree together; as we may see in the example of the apostles, furnished with the greatest church power, who took in the concurrence and consent of the brethren in church administrations. Also that scripture, 2 Cor. 2. 9. and 10. 6. do declare, That what the churches are to act and do in these matters they were to do in a way of obedience, and that not only to the direction of the apostles, but also of their ordinary elders. Acts 14. 15, 23, and 6. 2. 1 Cor. 5. 4. 2 Cor. 26. 7. Heb. 13. 17.

11. From the premises, namely, That the ordinary power of government belonging only to the elders, power of privilege remaineth with the brotherhood (as the power of judgment in matters of censure, and power of liberty in matters of liberty) it followeth, that in an organic church and right administration, all church acts proceed after the manner of a mixt administration, so as no church act can be consummated or perfected without the consent of both.

CHAP. XI.

Of the maintenance of church officers.

THE apostle concludes, that necessary and sufficient maintenance is due unto the ministers of the word, from the law of nature and nations, from the law of Moses, the equity thereof, as also the rule of common reason. Moreover, the scripture doth not only

call elders, labourers and workmen, but also speaking of them doth say, that the labourer is worthy of his hire; and requires, that he which is taught in the word should communicate to him in all good things; and mentions it as an ordinance of the Lord, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel; and forbiddeth the muzling the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn, 1 Cor. 9. 14, 15. Mat. 9. 38. and 10. 10. 1 Tim. 5. 18. Gal. 6. 6. 1 Cor. 9. 9, 14.

2. The scriptures alledged, requiring this maintenance as a bounden duty, and due debt, and not as a matter of alms and free gift, therefore people are not at liberty to do or not to do, what and when they please in this matter, no more than in any other commanded duty, and ordinance of the Lord; but ought of duty to minister of their carnal things, to them that labour among them in the word and doctrine, as well as as they ought to pay any other workmen their wages, and to discharge and satisfy their other debts, or to submit themselves to observe any other ordinance of the Lord, Rom. 15. 27. 1 Cor. 9. 21.

3. The apostle (Gal. 6. 6.) enjoining, that he which is taught communicateth to them that teacheth in all good things, doth not leave it arbitrary, what or how much a man shall give, or in what proportion, but even the latter as well as the former, is prescribed and appointed by the Lord, 1 Cor. 16. 2.

4. Not only members of churches, but all that are taught in the word, are to contribute unto him that teacheth in all good things. In case that congregations are defective in their contributions, the deacons are to call upon them to do their duty: if their call sufficeth not, the church by her power is to require it of their members; and where church power, through the corruption of men, doth not or cannot attain the end, the magistrate is to see that the ministry be duly provided for, as appears from the commended example of Nehemiah. The magistrates are nursing fathers, and nursing mothers, and stand charged with the custody of both tables; because it is better to prevent a scandal that it may not come, and easier also, than to remove it when it is given. Is most suitable to

rule, that by the churches care each man should know his proportion according to rule, what he should do, before he do it, that so his judgment and heart may be satisfied in what he doth, and just offence prevented in what is done, Acts 6. 3, 4. Neh. 13. 11. Isa. 49. 23. 2 Cor. 8. 13. 14.

CHAP. XII.

Of the admission of members into the church.

THE doors of the churches of Christ upon earth do not by God's appointment stand so wide open, that all sorts of people, good or bad, may freely enter therein at their pleasure, but such as are admitted thereto, as members, ought to be examined and tried first, whether they be fit and meet to be received, into church-society or not. The eunuch of Ethiopia, before his admission was examined by Philip, whether he did believe on Jesus Christ with all his heart. The angel of the church at Ephesus is commended for trying such as said they were apostles, and were not. There is like reason for trying of them that profess to be believers. The officers are charged with the keeping of the doors of the church, and therefore are in a special manner to make tryal of the fitness of such who enter. Twelve angels are set at the gates of the temple, lest such as where ceremonially unclean should enter thereinto. 2 Chron. 23. 19. Mat. 13. 25. and 22. 12. Acts 8. 37. Rev. 2. 2. Acts 9. 26. Rev. 21. 12. 2 Chro. 23. 19.

2. The things which are requisite to be found in all church members, are repentance from sin, and faith in Jesus Christ; and these are the things whereof men are to be examined at their admission into the church, and which then they must profess and hold forth in such sort, as may satisfy rational charity that the things are there indeed. John Baptist admitted men to baptism confessing and bewailing their sins; and of others it is said, That they came and confessed and shewed their deeds. Acts 2. 38 to 42. and 8. 37. Mat. 3. 6. Acts 19. 18.

3. The weakeſt meaſure of faith is to be accepted in thoſe that deſire to be admitted into the church, becauſe weak chriſtians, if ſincere, have the ſubſtance of that faith, repentance and holineſs which is required in church members; and ſuch have moſt need of the ordinances for their confirmation and growth in grace. The Lord Jeſus would not quench the ſmoaking flax, nor break the bruiſed reed, but gather the tender lambs in his arms, and carry them gently in his boſom. Such charity and tenderneſs is to be uſed, as the weakeſt chriſtian, if ſincere, may not be excluded nor diſcouraged. Severity of examination is to be avoided. Rom. 14. 1. Mat. 12. 20. Iſa. 40. 11.

4. In caſe any through exceſſive fear, or other infirmity, be unable to make their perſonal relation of their ſpiritual eſtate in public, it is ſufficient that the elders having received private ſatisfaction, make relation thereof in public before the church, they teſtifying their aſſents thereunto; this being the way that tendeth moſt to edification. But where perſons are of great abilities, there it is moſt expedient that they make their relations and confeſſions perſonally with their own mouth, as David profeſſeth of himſelf, Pſal. 66. 16.

5. A perſonal and public confeſſion, and declaring of God's manner of working upon the ſoul, is both lawful, expedient and uſeful, in ſundry reſpects, and upon ſundry grounds. Thoſe three thouſand, Acts 2. 37, 41. before they were admitted by the apoſtles, did manifeſt that they were pricked in the heart at Peter's ſermon, together with earneſt deſire to be delivered from their ſins, which now wounded their conſciences, and their ready receiving of the word of promiſe and exhortation. We are to be ready to render a reaſon of the hope that is in us, to every one that aſketh us; therefore we muſt be able and ready upon any occaſion to declare and ſhew our repentence for ſin, faith unfeigned, and effectual calling, becauſe theſe are the reaſons of a well grounded hope. I have not hidden my righteouſneſs from the great congregation, Pſal. 40. 10. 1 Pet. 3. 15. Heb. 11. 1. Eph. 1. 18.

6. This profeſſion of faith and repentence, as it muſt be made by ſuch at their admiſſion, that were never in church ſociety before; ſo nothing hindereth, but the ſame

way alſo be performed by ſuch as have formerly been members of ſome other church, and the church to which they now join themſelves as members may lawfully require the ſame. Thoſe three thouſand, Acts 2, which made their confeſſion, were members of the church of the Jews before, ſo were they that were baptiſed by John. Churches may err in their admiſſion and perſons regularly admitted, may fall into offence. Otherwiſe if churches might obtrude their members, or if church members, might obtrude themſelves upon other churches without due trial, the matter ſo requiring, both the liberty of churches would hereby be infringed, in that they might not examine thoſe, concerning whoſe fitneſs for communion they were unſatisfied; and beſides, the infringing of their liberty, the churches themſelves would unavoidably be corrupted, and the ordinances defiled, whilſt they might not refuſe, but muſt receive the unworthy; which is contrary unto the ſcripture, teaching that all churches are ſiſters, and therefore equal. Mat. 3. 1, 6. Gal. 2. 4. 1 Tim. 5. 24. Cant. 8. 8.

7. The like trial is to be required from ſuch members of the church as were born in the ſame, or received their memberſhip and were baptiſed in their infancy, or minority, by virtue of the covenant of their parents, when being grown up unto years of diſcretion, they ſhall deſire to be made partakers of the Lord's ſupper; unto which, becauſe holy things muſt not be given to the unworthy, therefore it is requiſite, that theſe as well as others, ſhould come to their trial and examination, and manifeſt their faith and repentance by an open profeſſion thereof, before they are received to the Lord's ſupper, and otherwiſe not to be admitted thereunto. Yet theſe church members that were ſo born, or received in their child-hood, before they are capable of being made partakers of full communion, have many privileges which others (not church members) have not; they are in covenant with God, have the ſeal thereof upon them, viz. baptiſm; and ſo if not regenerated, yet are in a more hopeful way of attaining regenerating grace, and all the ſpiritual bleſſings both of the covenant and ſeal: they are alſo under church-watch, and conſequently ſubject to the reprehenſions, admonitions, and cenſures thereof, for their healing and amendment, as need ſhall require, Mat. 7. 6. [illegible] 41. 27.

CHAP. XIII.

Of church members their removal from one church to another, and of recommendation and diſmiſſion.

CHURCH members may not remove or depart from the church, and ſo one from another as they pleaſe, nor without juſt and weighty cauſe, but ought to live and dwell together, foraſmuch as they are commanded not to forſake the aſſembling themſelves together. Such departure tends to the diſſolution and ruin of the body, as the pulling of ſtones and pieces of timber from the building, and of members from the natural body tends to the deſtruction of the whole. Heb. 10. 25.

2. It is therefore the duty of church-members in ſuch times and places where council may be had, to conſult with the church whereof they are members about their removal, that accordingly they having their approbation, may be encouraged or otherwiſe deſiſt. They who are joined with conſent, ſhould not depart without conſent, except forced thereunto. Pro. 11. 16.

3. If a member's departure be manifeſtly unſafe and ſinful, the church may not conſent thereunto; for in ſo doing, they ſhould not act in faith, and ſhould partake with him in his ſin. If the caſe be doubtful, and the perſon not to be perſwaded, it ſeemeth beſt to leave the matter unto God, and not forcibly to detain him. Rom. 14. 23. 1 Tim. 5. 22. Acts 21. 14.

4. Juſt reaſons for a member's removal of himſelf from the church, are, 1. If a man cannot continue without partaking in ſin. 2. In caſe of perſonal perſecution; ſo Paul departed from the diſciples at Damaſcus. Alſo in caſe of general perſecution, when all are ſcattered. 3. In caſe of real, and not only pretended want of competent ſubſiſtence, a door being opened for better ſupply in another place, together with the means of ſpiritual edification. In theſe or like caſes, a member may lawfully remove, and the church cannot lawfully detain him. Eph. 5. 11. Acts 9. 25, 29, 30. and 8. 1. Neh. 13. 20.

5. To ſeperate from a church, either out of contempt of their holy fellowſhip, or out of coveteouſneſs, or for

greater enlargements, with juſt grief to the church; or out of ſchiſm, or want of love, and out of a ſpirit of contention, in reſpect of ſome unkindneſs, or ſome evil only conceived, or indeed in the church, which might and ſhould be tolerated and healed with a ſpirit of meekneſs, and of which evil the church is not yet convinced (tho' perhaps himſelf be) nor admoniſhed; for theſe or the like reaſons to withdraw from public communion in word, or ſeals, or cenſures, is unlawful and ſinful. 2 Tim. 4. 10. Rom. 16. 17. Judge 5. 19. Eph. 4. 2, 3. Col. 3. 13. Gal. 6. 1, 2.

6. Such members as have orderly removed their habitation, ought to join themſelves unto the church in order where they do inhabit, if it may be; otherwiſe, they can neither perform the duties, nor receive the privileges of members. Such an example tolerated in ſome, is apt to corrupt others, which if many ſhould follow, would threaten the diſſolution and confuſion of churches, contrary to the ſcripture. Iſa. 56. 8. Acts 9. 26. 1 Cor. 14. 33.

7. Order requires that a member thus removing, have letters teſtimonial, and of diſmiſſion from the church whereof he yet is, unto the church whereunto he deſireth to be joined, leſt the church ſhould be deluded; that the church may receive him in the faith, and not be corrupted by receiving deceivers, and falſe brethren, until the perſon diſmiſſed be received into another church, he ceaſeth not by his letters or diſmiſſion to be a member of the church whereof he was, the church cannot make a member no member, but by excommunication. Acts 18. 27.

8. If a member be called to remove only for a time, where a church is, letters of recommendation are requiſite, and ſufficient for communion with that church, in the ordinances, and in their watch; as Phœbe, a ſervant of the church at Cenchrea, had letters written for her to the church at Rome, that ſhe might be received as becometh ſaints. Rom. 16. 1, 2. 2 Cor. 3, 1.

9. Such letters of recommendation and diſmiſſion were written for Apollos, for Marcus to the Coloſſians; for Phœbe to the Romans, for ſundry others to other churches.

And the apostle telleth us, that some persons, not sufficiently known otherwise, have special need of such letters, though he for his part had no need thereof. The use of them is to be a benefit and help to the party for whom they are written, and for the furthering of his receiving amongst the saints in the place whereto he goeth, and the due satisfaction of them in their receiving of him. Acts 18. 27. Col. 4. 10. Rom. 16. 1. 2 Cor. 3. 1.

CHAP. XIV.

Of excommunication, and other censures.

THE censures of the church are appointed by Christ for the preventing, removing, and healing of offences in the church; for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for the deterring others from the like offences, for purging out the leaven which may infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honor of Christ, and of his church, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing of the wrath of God, that may justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders. 1 Tim. 5. 20. Deut. 17. 12, 13. Jude 5. 19. Deut. 13. 11. 1 Cor. 5. 6. Rom. 2. 24. Rev. 2. 14, 15, 16, 20.

2. If an offence be private, (one brother offending another) the offender is to go and acknowledge his repentance for it unto his offended brother, who is then to forgive him; but if the offender neglect or refuse to do it, the brother offended is to go and convince and admonish him of it, between themselves privately: If thereupon the offender be brought to repent of his offence, the admonisher hath won his brother; but if the offender hear not his brother, the brother offended is to take with him one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established, (whether the word of admonition, if the offender receive it; or the word of complaint, if he refuse it;) for if he refuse it, the offended brother is by the mouth of the elders to tell the church, and if he hear the church, and declare the same by peni-

tent confeſſion, he is recovered and gained; *and if the* church diſcern him to be willing to hear, yet not fully convinced of his offence, as in caſe of hereſie, they are to diſpenſe to him a public admonition; which declaring the offender to lie under the public offence of the church, doth thereby withhold or ſuſpend him from the holy fellowſhip of the Lord's ſupper, till his offence be removed by penitent confeſſion. If he ſtill continue obſtinate, they are to caſt him out by excommunication. Mat. 5. 23, 24. Luke 17. 3, 4. Mat. 18. 15, 26, 17. Tit. 3. 10.

3. But if the offence be more public at firſt, and of a more heinous and criminal nature, to wit, ſuch as are condemned by the light of nature, then the church, without ſuch gradual proceedings, is to caſt out the offender from their holy communion, for the farther mortifying of his ſins, and the healing of his ſoul in the day of the Lord Jeſus. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5, 11.

4. In dealing with an offender, great care is to be taken, that we be neither over ſtrict or rigorous, nor too indulgent or remiſs; our proceeding herein, ought to be with a ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering ourſelves, leaſt we alſo be tempted; and that the beſt of us have need of much forgiveneſs from the Lord. Yet the winning and healing of the offender's ſoul, being the end of theſe endeavors, we muſt not daub with untempered mortar, nor heal the wounds of our brethren ſlighly. On ſome have compaſſion, others ſave with fear. Gal. 6. 1. Mat. 18. 34, 35. Ezek. 13. 10.

5. While the offender remains excommunicate, the church is to refrain all member-like communion with him in ſpiritual things, and alſo from all familiar communion with him in civil things, further than the neceſſity of natural, domeſtical or civil relations do require; and are therefore to forbear to eat and drink with him, that he may be aſhamed. Mat. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 11. 2 Theſ. 3. 6, 14.

6. Excommunication being a ſpiritual puniſhment, it doth not prejudice the excommunicate in, nor deprive him of his civil rights, and therefore toucheth not princes, nor other magiſtrates in point of their civil dignity or authority, and the excommunicate being but as a publican, and a heathen, (heathens being lawfully permitted to come to

hear the word in church assemblies) we acknowledge therefore the like liberty of hearing the word may be permitted to persons excommunicate, that is permitted unto heathen, And because we are not without hope of his recovery, we are not to account him as an enemy, but to admonish him as a brother. 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. 2 Thess. 3. 14.

7. If the Lord sanctify the censure to the offender, so as by the grace of Christ he doth testify his repentance with humble confession of his sins, and judging of himself, giving glory unto God, the church is then to forgive him, and to comfort him, and to restore him to the wonted brotherly communion, which formerly he enjoyed with them, 2 Cor. 2. 7, 8.

8. The suffering of the prophane or scandalous livers to continue in fellowship, and partake in the sacraments, is doubtless a great sin in those that have power in their hands to redress it, and do it not: Nevertheless, inasmuch as Christ and his apostles in their times, and the prophets and the other godly in theirs, did lawfully partake of the Lord's commanded ordinances in the Jewish church, and neither taught nor practised separation from the same, though unworthy ones were permitted therein, and inasmuch as the faithful in the church of Corinth, wherein were many unworthy persons and practices, are never commanded to absent themselves from the sacraments, because of the same; therefore the godly in like cases are not presently to separate, Rev. 2. 14, 15, 20. Mat. 23. 3. Acts 3. 1. 1 Cor. 6. and 15. 12.

9. As separation from such a church wherein prophane and scandalous persons are tolerated, is not presently necessary; so for the members thereof, otherwise unworthy, hereupon to abstain from communicating with such a church in the participation of the sacraments is unlawful. For as it were unreasonable for an innocent person to be punished for the faults of others, wherein he hath no hand, and whereunto he gave no consent; so is it more unreasonable, that a godly man should neglect duty, and punish himself, in not coming for his portion in the blessing of the seals, as he ought, because others are suffered to come, that ought not; especially considering that himself doth neither consent to their sins, nor to their approaching to the ordinance in their sin, nor to the neglect of others

who shall put them away, and do not; but on the contrary, doth heartily mourn for these things, modestly and seasonably stir up others to do their duty. If the church cannot be reformed, they may use their liberty, as is specified, chap. 13. sect. 4. But this all the godly are bound unto, even every one to do his endeavour, according to his power and place, that the unworthy may be duly proceeded against by the church, to whom this matter doth appertain, 2 Chron. 30. 18. Gen. 18. 25. Ezek. 9. 4.

CHAP. XV.

Of the communion of churches one with another.

ALTHOUGH churches be distinct and therefore may not be confounded one with another, and equal, and therefore have not dominion one over another; yet all the churches ought to preserve church communion one with another, because they are all united unto Christ, not only as a mystical but as a political head, whence is derived a communion suitable thereunto. Rev. 1. 4. Cant. 8. 8. Rom. 16. 16. 1 Cor. 16. 19. Acts 15. 23. Rev. 2. 1.

2. The communion of churches is exercised sundry ways. 1. By way of mutual care, in taking thought for one anothers welfare. 2. By way of consultation one with another, when we have occasion to require the judgment and counsel of other churches, touching any person or cause wherewith they may be better acquainted than ourselves. As the church at Antioch consulted with the apostles and elders of the church at Jerusalem, about the question of circumcision of the Gentiles, and about the false teachers that broached that doctrine. In which case, when any church wanted light or peace amongst themselves, it is a way of communion of churches (according to the word) to meet together, by their elders and other messengers in a synod, to consider and argue the points in doubt or difference; and having found out the way of truth and peace, to commend the same by their letter and messengers to

the churches whom the same may concern. But if a church be rent with divisions among themselves, or lie under any open scandal, and yet refuse to consult with other churches for healing or removing of the same, it is matter of just offence both to the Lord Jesus, and to other churches, as bewraying too much want of mercy and faithfulness, not to seek to bind up the breaches and wounds of the church and brethren; and therefore the state of such a church calleth aloud upon other churches to exercise a fuller act of brotherly communion, to wit, by way of admonition. 3. A third way of communion of churches is by way of admonition, to wit, in case any public offence be found in a church, which either discern not or are slow in proceeding to use means for the removing and healing thereof. Paul had no authority over Peter, yet when he saw Peter not walking with a right foot, he publickly rebuked him before the church. Though churches have no more authority one over another, than one apostle had over another, yet as one apostle might admonish another, so may one church admonish another, and yet without usurpation. In which case, if the church that lieth under offence, do not hearken to the church that doth admonish her, the church is to acquaint other neighbour churches with that offence which the offending church still lieth under, together with the neglect of their brotherly admonition given unto them; whereupon those other churches are to join in seconding the admonition formerly given; and if still the offending church continue in obstinacy and impenitency, they may forbear communion with them, and are to proceed to make use of the help of a synod, or council of neighbour churches walking orderly (if a greater cannot conveniently be had) for their conviction. If they hear not the synod, the synod having declared them too obstinate, particular churches approving and accepting the judgment of the synod, are to declare the sentence of non-communion respectively concerning them; and thereupon, out of a religious care to keep their own communion pure, they may justly withdraw themselves from participation with them at the Lord's table, and from such other acts of holy communion as the communion of churches doth otherwise allow and require. Nevertheless, if any members of such a church as live under

public offence, do not consent to the offence of the church, but do in due sort bear witness against it, they are still to be received to wonted communion; for it is not equal, that the innocent should suffer with the offensive. Yea, furthermore, if such innocent members, after due waiting in the use of all good means for the healing of the offence of their own church, shall at last (with the allowance of the council of neighbour churches) withdraw from the fellowship of their own church, and offer themselves to the fellowship of another, we judge it lawful for the other church to receive them (being otherwise fit) as if they had been orderly dismissed to them from their own church. 4. A fourth way of communion of churches is by way of participation. The members of one church occasionally coming to another, we willingly admit them to partake with us at the Lord's table, it being the seal of our communion, not only with Christ, nor only with the members of our own churches, but also of all the churches of the saints; in which regard we refuse not to baptize their children presented to us, if either their own minister, be absent, or such a fruit of holy fellowship be desired with us. In like case, such churches as are furnished with more ministers than one, do willingly afford one of their own ministers to supply the place of an absent or sick minister of another church for a needful season. 5. A fifth way of church communion, is by way of recommendation, when the member of one church hath occasion to reside in another church, if but for a season, we commend him to their watchful fellowship, by letters of recommendation, but if he be called to settle his abode there, we commit him according to his desire, to the fellowship of their covenant, by letters of dismission. 6. A sixth way of church communion is in case of need, to minister relief and succour one unto another, either of able members, to furnish them with officers, or of outward support, to the necessities of poorer churches, as did the churches of the Gentiles contribute liberally to the poor saints at Jerusalem. Cant. 8. 8. Acts 15. 2, 6, 22, 23. Ezek. 34. 4. Gal. 2. 11 to 14. Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17. by proportion. Gen. 18. 25. 1 Cor. 12. 13. Rom. 16. 1. Acts 18. 27. and 11. 22, 29. Rom. 13. 26, 27.

3. When a company of believers purpose to gather into a church fellowship, it is requisite for their safer pro-

ceeding, and the maintaining the communion of churches, that they signify their intent unto the neighbour churches, walking according unto the order of the gospel, and desire their presence, and help, and right hand of fellowship, which they ought readily to give unto them, when there is no just cause to except against their proceedings. Gal. 2. 1, 2. and 9. by proportion.

4. Besides these several ways of communion, there is also a way of propagation of churches: when a church shall grow too numerous, it is a way, and fit season to propagate one church out of another, by sending forth such of their members as are willing to remove, and to procure some officers to them, as may enter with them into church estate amongst themselves. As bees, when the hive is too full, issue forth by swarms, and are gathered into other hives, so the churches of Christ may do the same upon like necessity; and therein hold forth to them the right hand of fellowship, both in their gathering into a church, and in the ordination of their officers, Isa. 40. 20. Cant. 8. 8, 9.

CHAP. XVI.

Of Synods.

SYNODS orderly assembled, and rightly proceeding according to the pattern, Acts 15, we acknowledge as the ordinance of Christ; and tho' not absolutely necessary to the being, yet many times, through the iniquity of men, and preverseness of times, necessary to the well-being of churches, for the establishment of truth and peace therein, Acts 15. 2 to 15.

2. Synods being spiritual and ecclesiastical assemblies, are therefore made up of spiritual and ecclesiastical causes. The next efficient cause of them under Christ, is the power of the churches, sending forth their elders and other messengers, who being met together in the name of Christ, are the matter of a synod: and they in arguing, debating, and determining matters of religion according to the word, and publishing the same to the churches it concerneth, do put forth the proper and formal acts of a synod, to the

conviction of errors and hereſies, and the eſtabliſhment of truth and peace in the churches, which is the end of a ſynod, Acts 15. 2, 3, 6, 7, to 23, 31. and 16. 4, 15.

3. Magiſtrates have power to call a ſynod, by calling to the churches to ſend forth their elders, and other meſſengers, to counſel, and aſſiſt them in matters of religion; but yet the conſtituting of a ſynod is a church act, and may be tranſacted by the churches even when civil magiſtrates may be enemies to the churches, and church-aſſemblies, 2 *Chron.* 19. 4, 5, to 11. *Acts.* 15.

4. It belongeth unto ſynods and councils, to debate and determine controverſies of faith, and caſes of conſcience; to clear from the word holy directions for the holy worſhip of God, and good government of the church; to bear witneſs againſt male adminiſtration and corruption in doctrine or manners in any particular church; and to give directions for the reformation thereof; not to exerciſe church cenſures in way of diſcipline, nor any other act of church authority or juriſdiction, which that preſidential ſynod did forbear, *Acts.* 15. 1, 2, 6, 7. 1 *Chron.* 15, 13. 2 *Chron.* 29. 6, 7. *Acts* 15. 24, 28, 29.

5. The ſynods directions and determinations ſo far as conſonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and ſubmiſſion; not only for their agreement therewith (which is the principal ground thereof. and without which they bind not at all) but alſo ſecondarily for the power where by they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in his word, *Acts* 15.

6. Becauſe it is difficult, if not impoſſible, for many churches to come together in one place, in all their members univerſally; therefore they may aſſemble by their delegates or meſſengers; as the church at *Antioch* went not all to *Jeruſalem*, but ſome ſelect men for that purpoſe. Becauſe none are or ſhould be more fit to know the ſtate of the churches nor to adviſe of ways for the good thereof, than elders; therefore it is fit that in the choice of the meſſengers for ſuch aſſemblies they have ſpecial reſpect unto ſuch; yet inaſmuch as not only Paul and Barnabas, but certain others alſo were ſent to *Jeruſalem* from *Antioch*, and when they were come to *Jeruſalem*, not only the

apoſtles and elders, but other brethren alſo do aſſemble and meet about the matter; therefore ſynods are to conſiſt both of elders, and other church members endued with gifts, and ſent by the churches, not excluding the preſence of any brethren in the churches, *Acts* 15. 2, 22, 23.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the civil magiſtrates power in matters eccleſiaſtical.

IT is lawful, profitable and neceſſary for chriſtians to gather themſelves together into church eſtate, and therein to exerciſe all the ordinances of Chriſt, according unto the word, although the content of the magiſtrate could not be had thereunto; becauſe the apoſtles and chriſtians in their time did frequently thus practiſe, when the magiſtrates all of them being *Jewiſh* or *Pagan*, and moſt perſecuting enemies, would give no countenance or conſent to ſuch matters, *Acts* 2. 41, 47. and 4. 1, 2, 3.

2. Church government ſtands in no oppoſition to civil government of common-wealths, nor any way intrencheth upon the authority of civil magiſtrates in their juriſdiction; nor any whit weakneth their hands in governing, but rather ſtrengtheneth them, furthereth the people in yielding more hearty and conſcionable obedience unto them whatſoever ſome ill affected perſons to the ways of Chriſt have ſuggeſted, to alienate the affection of kings and princes from the ordinances of Chriſt; as if the kingdom of Chriſt in his church could not riſe and ſtand without the falling and weakening of their government, which is alſo of Chriſt; whereas the contrary is moſt true, that they may both ſtand together and flouriſh, the one being helpful unto the other, in their diſtinct and due adminiſtrations. *John* 18. 36. *Acts* 25. 8. *Iſa.* 49. 23.

3. The power and authority of magiſtrates is not for the reſtraining of churches, or any other good works, but for helping in and furthering thereof; and therefore the conſent and countenance of magiſtrates, when it may be had,

is not to be slighted or lightly esteemed; but on the contrary, it is part of that honor due to christian magistrates to desire and crave there consent and approbation therein, which being obtained, the churches may then proceed in their way with more encouragement and comfort. *Rom.* 13, 4. 1 *Tim.* 2. 2.

4. It is not in the power of magistrates to compel their subjects to become church members, and to partake at the Lord's table; for the priests are reproved that brought unworthy ones into the sanctuary: Then as it was unlawful for the priest, so it is as unlawful to be done by civil magistrates, those whom the church cast out if they were in, the magistrate ought not to thrust them into the church, nor to hold them therein, *Ezek.* 44. 7. 9. 1 *Cor.* 5. 11.

5. As it is unlawful for church officers to meddle with the sword of the magistrate, so it is unlawful for the magistrate to meddle with the work proper to church officers. The acts of *Moses* and *David*, who were not only princes, but prophets, were extraordinary, therefore not imitable. Against such usurpation, the Lord witnessed by smiting *Uzziah* with leprosy, for presuming to offer incense. *Mat.* 2. 25, 26. 2 *Chron.* 26. 16, 17.

6. It is the duty of the magistrate to take care of matters of religion, and to improve his civil authority for the observing of the duties commanded in the first, as well as for observing of the duties commanded in the second table. They are called Gods. The end of the magistrates office, is not only the quiet and peaceable life of the subject in matters of righteousness and honesty, but also in matters of godliness. *Moses*, *Joshua*, *David*, *Solomon*, *Asa*, *Jehoshaphat*, *Hezekiah*, *Josiah*, are much commended by the Holy Ghost for the putting forth their authority in matters of religion: On the contrary, such kings as have been failing this way, are frequently taxed and reproved by the Lord. And not only the kings of *Judah*, but also *Jehu*, *Nehemiah* the king of *Nineveh*, *Darius*, *Artaxerxes*, *Nebuchadnezzar*, whom none looked at as types of Christ, (though were it so, there were no place for any [illegible]

tion) are commended in the book of God, for exercising their authority this way, *Psalm.* 82. 8. 1 *Tim.* 2. 1, 2. 1 *Kings* 15. 14. and 22. 43. 2 *Kings* 12. 3. and 14, 4. and. 15. 35. 1 *Kings* 20. 42. *Job* 29. 25. and 31. 26, 28. *Neh.* 13. *Jonah* 3. 7. *Ezra.* 7. *Dan.* 3. 29.

7. The objects of the power of the magistrate are not things meerly inward, and so not subject to his cognizance and view, as unbelief, hardness of heart, erroneous opinions not vented, but only such things as are acted by the outward man; neither is their power to be exercised in commanding such acts of the outward man, and punishing the neglect thereof; as are but meer inventions & devices of men, but about such acts as are commanded and forbidden in the word; yea, such as the word doth clearly determine, though not always clearly to the judgment of the magistrate or others, yet clearly in itself. In these he of right ought to put forth his authority, though oft-times actually he doth it not. 1 Kings 20. 28, 42.

8. Idolatry, blasphemy, heresy, venting corrupt and pernicious opinions, that destroy the foundation, open contempt of the word preached, prophanation of the Lord's day, disturbing the peaceable administration and exercise of the worship and holy things of God, and the like, are to be restrained and punished by civil authority. Deut. 13. 1 King. 20. 28, 42. Dan. 3. 29. Zech. 13. 3. Neh. 13. 31. 1 Tim. 2. 2. Rom. 13. 4.

9. If any church, one or more shall grow schismatical, rending it self from the communion of other churches, or shall walk incorrigibly or obstinately in any corrupt way of their own, contrary to the rule of the word; in such case the magistrate is to put forth his co-ersive power, as the matter shall require. The tribes on this side *Jordan* intended to make war against the other tribes, for building the alter of witness, whom they suspected to have turned away therein from following of the LORD. Josh. 22.

APPENDIX.

Being some collections for the information of those that are not acquainted with the principles and practices of the first and most eminent leaders, in the churches of CHRIST in *New-England*.

THE platform of church discipline, was agreed on and consented unto by many great, learned and pious persons, from the four famous colonies in *New-England*, assembled in the synod at *Cambridge*, 1648. Something of which may be read in a late print, entitled, *A Testimony to the Order of the Gospel in the Churches of* New-England.

The deservedly famous and reverend Mr. *John Willson* pastor, and *John Cotton* teacher of the first church of Christ in *Boston*, were two of those worthies that composed the platform of church discipline.

The reverend Mr. *John Norton*, teacher of the said church in *Boston*, in his election sermon, *May* 22, 1661, page 12, gives this advice, "Take care that the order of the gospel may have a free passage in the churches; I mean that our practice may effectually answer our doctrine, in that book, entitled, The Platform of CHURCH DISCIPLINE."

And in his last sermon, preached on his weekly lecture, *April* 2, 1663, a little before his death, page 37, "Remember that we have the pattern in the mount, I mean we have the scripture as a rule, and you have the Platform of Church Discipline given to you in way of council, as the Confession of our Faith to this way of church government: You know in what manner it was that which (for the substance of it) owns the cause congregational: If any are departed from it let them look to it."

The reverend Mr. *John Davenport*, in his catechism, printed *Anno* 1669, for the use of the first church in *Boston*, of which he was then pastor, shows his concurrence with the Platform of Church Discipline in matters relating to church government.

The reverend Mr. *John Oxenbridge*, pastor of said church, by his practice manifested his consent to the way of church government, as it is stated in the Platform of Church Discipline: And in his election sermon in *May* 1671, declared his agreement with the principles of parity and power of the churches.

The reverend Mr. *James Allen*, teacher of said church, in his election sermon, *May* 28, 1679, page 10, 11. Having taken notice of the Platform of Church Discipline, as manifesting the judgment of the ministers of *New-England*, asserting the authoritative rule of the elders, with the liberty of the brethren, expresseth himself thus, "Though the judgment of the best should not be looked upon as scripture *Canons*, nor bind any further than it is found agreeing with the word of God, by which it ought to be tried; yet I think I may safely say, that is a clearer judgment of the mind of God in the scripture, in that matter, than can be expected in the next generation. It is true, in improvements of natural light, that may be increased by industry, and those that stand upon others shoulders may see further than they did upon whose shoulders they stand, but it is not so in spiritual things, the further knowledge of which depends upon revelation." Eph. 1. 17. Psal. 25. 9.

The reverend and learned Mr. *Urian Oakes*, president of Harvard-college, and pastor of the church of Christ in Cambridge, in his election sermon, *May* 7, 1673. p. 48. declared himself as follows, "I beg that we may keep the King's high way, the way that Christ himself hath cast up for us, and that our worthy predecessors have travelled in before us, the way that hath been stated, not in the private models of some fanciful and conceited men, but in the Platform of Church Discipline; the truest understanding of these things is from the Platform deduced out of the word of GOD."

At a SYNOD at *Boston, New-England*, Sept. 10, 1679.

IT was put to vote, whether the assembly did approve of *The Platform of Church Discipline*? And both elders and brethren did unanimously lift up their hands in the affirmative, not one appearing when the vote was propounded, in the negative; but it jointly passed in these words, "A Synod of the churches in the province of the *Massachusetts*, being called by the honored general court to convene at *Boston*, the 10th of *September*, 1679, having read and considered *The Platform of Church Discipline*, agreed upon by the Synod assembled at *Cambridge*, 1648, do unanimously approve of the said *Platform*, for the substance of it, desiring that the churches may continue stedfast in *the order of the gospel*, according to what is therein declared from the word of GOD. In a print, entitled, *The necessity of reformation*, &c."

At a general meeting of ministers in Boston, New-England, *May* 27, 1697.

SUNDRY reverend and worthy ministers signed an instrument, where they declared their full purpose, by the help of the Lord, to maintain in their several places, the purity, and fellowship, and liberties of the churches, &c. In a print, entitled, *Thirty important questions resolved*, &c.

Col. 2. 6. *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.*

Eph. 4. part of the 14th verse. *Be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.*

Gal. 5. 1. *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.*

A

CONFESSION

OF

FAITH,

Owned and consented unto by the

ELDERS AND MESSENGERS

Of the CHURCHES assembled at BOSTON in NEW-ENGLAND, *May* 12, 1680.

Being the second Session of that

SYNOD.

- - - - - - - - - One Faith. EPH. iv. 5.

Joying and beholding your Order, and the stedfastness of your Faith in Christ. COL. ii. 5.

BOSTON:
Printed and Sold by JOHN BOYLES, in Marlborough-Street.
MDCCLXXII.

At a General Court held at BOSTON, May 19, 1680.

THIS court having taken into ſerious conſideration the requeſt that hath been preſented by ſeveral of the reverend elders, in the name of the late SYNOD, do approve thereof, and accordingly order, THE CONFESSION OF FAITH, agreed upon at their ſecond ſeſſion, and, THE PLATFORM OF DISCIPLINE, conſented unto by the Synod at *Cambridge*, Anno 1648, to be printed, for the benefit of the churches in preſent and after times.

EDWARD RAWSON, Sec'ry.

A PREFACE.

THE Lord Jesus Christ witnessed a good confession, at the time when he said, To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth; and he taketh notice of it, to the praise and high commendation of the church in Pergamus, that they held fast his name, and had not denied his Faith. Nor are they worthy the name of christians, who, though the Lord by his Providence call them publickly to own the truth they have professed, shall nevertheless refuse to declare what they believe, as to those great and fundamental principles in the doctrine of Christ, the knowledge whereof is necessary unto salvation. We find how ready the apostle was to make A Confession of his Faith; though for that hope's sake he was accused and put in chains. And the martyr's of Jesus, who have laid down their lives in bearing witness to the truth, against the infidelity, idolatry, heresy, apostacy of the world, when Pagan, Arian, or overspread with Popish darkness: Having their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, were free and forward in their testimony, confessing the truth, yea, sealing it with their blood. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, Rom. 10. 10. Nor is there a greater evidence of being in a state of salvation, than such a confession, if made in times or places where men are exposed to utmost suffering upon that account. 1 John, 4. 15. And if Confession of faith be, in some cases, of such importance and necessity, as hath been expressed; it must needs be in itself, a work pleasing in the sight of God, for his servants to declare unto the world, what those principles of truth are, which they have received, and are (by the help of Christ) purposed to live and die in the stedfast profession of. Some of the Lord's worthies have been of renown among his people in this re-

ſpect ; eſpecially Irænius *and* Athanaſius *of old, and of latter times* Beza, *all whoſe (not to mention others) Confeſſions, with the advantage which the church of God hath received thereby, are famouſly known.*

And it muſt needs tend much to the honor of the dear and bleſſed name of the Lord Jeſus, in caſe many churches do join together in their teſtimony. How ſignally the Lord hath owned the Confeſſion of the four general Synods or Councils for the ſuppreſſion of the hereſies of thoſe times, needs not to be ſaid, ſince no man can be ignorant thereof, that hath made it his concern to be acquainted with things of this nature. The Confeſſion of the Bohemians, *of the* Waldenſes, *and of the reformed proteſtant churches abroad, (which alſo, to ſhew what harmony in reſpect of doctrine there is among all ſincere profeſſors of the truth, have been publiſhed in one volume) all theſe have been of ſingular uſe, not only to thoſe that lived in the ages when theſe declarations were emitted, but unto poſterity, yea, unto this day.*

There have been ſome who have reflected upon theſe New-Engliſh churches for our defect in this matter, as if our principles were unknown ; whereas it is well-known, that as to matters of doctrine we agree with other reformed churches : Nor was it that, but what concerns worſhip and diſcipline, that cauſed our fathers to come into this wilderneſs, while it was a land not ſown, that ſo they might have liberty to practiſe accordingly. And it is a ground of holy rojoicing before the Lord, that now there is no advantage left for thoſe that may be diſaffected towards us, to object any thing of that nature againſt us. For it hath pleaſed the only wiſe God ſo to diſpoſe in his Providence, as that the elders and meſſengers of the churches in the colony of the Maſſachuſetts *in* New-England, *did, by the call and encouragement of the honored General Court, meet together* Sept. 10, 1679.

This ſynod at their 2d ſeſſion, which was May 12, 1680, *conſulted and conſidered of a Confeſſion of Faith. That which was conſented unto by the elders and meſſengers of the*

congregational churches in England, *who met at at the* Savoy, *(being for the most part, some small variations excepted, the same with that which was agreed upon first by the Assembly at* Westminster, *and was approved of by the Synod at* Cambridge *in* New-England, *Anno* 1648, *as also by a General Assembly in* Scotland) *was twice publickly read, examined and approved of: that little variation which we have made from the one, in compliance with the other may be seen by those who please to compare them. But we have (for the main) chosen to express ourselves in the words of these Reverend Assemblies, that so we might not only with one heart, but with one mouth glorify God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

As to what concerns church-government, we refer to the Platform of Discipline agreed upon by the elders and messengers of these churches, Anno 1648, *and solemnly owned and confirmed by the late Synod.*

What hours of temptation may overtake these churches, is not for us to say. Only the Lord doth many times so order things, that when his people have made a good Confession, they shall be put upon the trial one way or other, to see whether they have (or who among them hath not) been sincere in what they have done.

The LORD grant that the loins of our minds may be so girt about with truth, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

CHAP. I.

Of the holy Scripture.

ALTHOUGH the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God, as to leave men unexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation: Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times, and in diverse manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; & afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly to writing: Which maketh the holy scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

2. Under the name of holy scripture, or the word of God written, are now contained all the the books of the old and new testament, which are these:

Of the Old Testament.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi.

Of the New Testament.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, the Acts of the apostles, Pauls epistle to the Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 to Timothy, 2 to Timothy, to Titus, to Philemon, The epistle to the Hebrews, the epistle of James, the first and second epistles of Peter, the first second and third epistles of John, the epistle of Jude, the Revelation.

All which are given by the inſpiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

3. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inſpiration, are no part of the canon of the ſcripture; and therefore are of no authority in the church of God, nor to be any otherwiſe approved or made uſe of, than other human writings.

4. The authority of the holy ſcripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the teſtimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth it ſelf) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, becauſe it is the word of God.

5. We may be moved and induced by the teſtimony of the church, to an high and reverened eſteem of the holy ſcripture. And the heavenlineſs of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majeſty of the ſtyle, the conſent of all the parts, the ſcope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God) the full diſcovery it makes of the only way of mans ſalvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence it ſelf to be the word of God; yet notwithſtanding, our full preſwaſion and aſſurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the holy ſpirit, bearing witneſs by and with the word in our hearts.

6. The whole counſel of God concerning all things neceſſary for his own glory, man's ſalvation, faith and and life, is either ſet down in ſcripture, or by good and neceſſary conſequence may be deduced from ſcripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheleſs we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be neceſſary for the ſaving underſtanding of ſuch things as are revealed in the word: And that there are ſome circumſtances concerning the worſhip of God and government of the church, common to human actions and ſocieties, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and chriſtian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be obſerved.

7. All things in ſcripture are not alike plain in themſelves, nor alike clear unto all: Yet thoſe things which are neceſſary to be known, believed and obſerved for ſalvation, are ſo clearly propounded and opened in ſome place of

scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

8. The old testament in *Hebrew*, (which was the native language of the people of God of old) and the new testament in *Greek*, (which at the time of writing of it was most generally known to the nations) being immediately inspired by God, & by his singular care & providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them; therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the scriptures may have hope.

9. The infallible rule of interpretation of scripture, is the scripture it self; and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one) it must be searched and known by other places, that speak more clearly.

10. The supream judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other, but the holy scriptures delivered by the Spirit; into which scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.

CHAP. II.

Of God, and of the Holy Trinity.

THERE is but one only living and true God; who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure Spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory, most

loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal, most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

2. God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in, and of himself; and is alone in, and unto himself, all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth: In his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service or obedience, as creatures, they owe unto the creator, and whatever he is further pleased to require of them.

3. In the unity of the God-head there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding: The Son is eternally begotten of the Father: The Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. Which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependance upon him.

CHAP. III.

Of God's eternal Decree.

GOD from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: Yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not de-

creed any thing, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

3. By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death.

4. These angels and men thus predestinated, and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

5. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his meer free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverence in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto, and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he by the eternal and most free purpose of his will fore-ordained all the means thereunto: Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in *Adam*, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power, through faith, unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the elect only.

7. The rest of mankind God has pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or with-holdeth mercy, as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

7. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination, is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

CHAP. IV.

Of Creation.

IT pleaſed God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, for the manifeſtation of the glory of his eternal power, wiſdom and goodneſs, in the beginning to create or make of nothing the world, and all things therein, whether viſible or inviſible, in the ſpace of ſix days, and all very good.

2. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reaſonable and immortal ſouls, endued with knowledge, righteouſneſs and true holineſs, after his own image, having the law of God written in their heart, and power to fulfil it; and yet under a poſſibility of tranſgreſſing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was ſubject to change. Beſides this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

CHAP. V.

Of Providence.

GOD the great creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, diſpoſe and govern all creatures, actions, and things from the greateſt even to the leaſt, by his moſt wiſe and holy Providence, according to his infallible fore-knowledge, and the free and immutable counſel of his own will, to the praiſe of the glory of his wiſdom, power, juſtice, goodneſs and mercy.

2. Although in relation to the fore-knowledge and decree of God, the firſt cauſe, all things come to paſs immutably, and infallibly; yet by the ſame Providence he ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of ſecond cauſes, either neceſſarily, freely, or contingently.

3. God in his ordinary Providence maketh uſe of means, yet is free to work without, above, and againſt them at his pleaſure.

4. The almighty power, unſearchable wiſdom and the infinite goodneſs of God, ſo far manifeſt themſelves in his

Providence, in that his determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, (and that not by a bare permission) which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth in a manifold dispensation, to his own most holy ends, yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who being most holy and righteous neither is, nor can be the author or approver of sin.

5. The most wise, righteous and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption, and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled, and to raise them to a more close and constant dependance for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

6. As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous judge for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only with-holde h his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects, as their corruption makes occasious of sin; and withal gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softning of others.

7. As the Providence of God doth in general reach to all creatures, so after a most special manner it taketh care of his church, and disposeth all things for the good thereof.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof.

GOD having made a covenant of works and life thereupon, with our first parents, and all their posterity in them, they being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, did willfully transgress the law of their creation, and break the covenant in eating the forbidden fruit,

2. By this ſin they, and we in them, fell from original righteouſneſs and communion with God, and ſo became dead in ſin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of ſoul and body.

3. They being the root, and by God's appointment ſtanding in the room and ſtead of all mankind, the guilt of this ſin imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed to all their poſterity deſcending from them by ordinary generation.

4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indiſpoſed, diſabled and made oppoſite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual tranſgreſſions.

5. This corruption of nature during this life, doth remain in thoſe that are regenerated; and although it be through Chriſt pardoned and mortified, yet both it ſelf, and all the motions thereof are truly and properly ſin.

6. Every ſin, both original and actual, being a tranſgreſſion of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature bring guilt upon the ſinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curſe of the law, and ſo made ſubject to death, with all miſeries ſpiritual, temporal and eternal.

CHAP. VII.

Of God's Covenant with Man.

THE diſtance between God and the creature is ſo great, that although reaſonable creatures, do owe obedience to him as their creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life, but by ſome voluntary condeſcention on God's part, which he hath been pleaſed to expreſs by way of covenant.

2. The firſt covenant made with man, was a covenant of works, wherein life was promiſed to *Adam*, and in him to his poſterity, upon condition of perfect and perſonal obedience.

3. Man by his fall having made himſelf uncapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleaſed to make a ſecond, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein he freely offereth unto ſinners life and ſalvation by Jeſus

Chriſt, requiring of them faith in him that they may be ſaved, and promiſing to give unto all thoſe that are ordained unto life, his holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe.

4. This covenant of grace is frequently ſet forth in ſcripture by the name of a teſtament, in reference to the death of Jeſus Chriſt the teſtator, and to the everlaſting inheritance, with all things belonging to it therein bequeathed.

5. Although this covenant hath been differently and variouſly adminiſtred in reſpect of ordinances and inſtitutions in the time of the law, and ſince the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh; yet for the ſubſtance and efficacy of it, to all its ſpiritual and ſaving ends, it is one and the ſame; upon the account of which various diſpenſations, it is called the old and new teſtament.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Chriſt the Mediator.

IT pleaſed God in his eternal purpoſe, to chuſe and ordain the Lord Jeſus his only begotten Son, according to a covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man; the prophet, prieſt, and king, the head and Saviour of his church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world: Unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his ſeed, & to be by him in time redeemed, called, juſtified ſanctified and glorified.

2. The Son of God, the ſecond perſon in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one ſubſtance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullneſs of time was come, take upon him mans nature, with all the eſſential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without ſin, being conceived by the power of the holy Ghoſt in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her ſubſtance: So that two whole perfect and diſtinct natures, the godhead and the manhood, were inſeperably joined together in one perſon, without converſion, compoſition, or confuſion; which perſon, is very God and very man, yet one Chriſt, the only mediator between God and man.

2. The Lord Jeſus in his human nature thus united to the divine in the perſon of the Son; was ſanctified and anoint-

ed with the holy Spirit above measure ; having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled and full of grace & truth, he might be throughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator and surety ; which office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his Father, who also put all power & judgement into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.

4. This office the Lord Jesus Christ did most willingly undertake ; which that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it, and underwent the punishment due to us which we should have borne and suffered, being made sin and a curse for us, enduring most grievous torments immediately from God in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body, was crucified, and died, was buried and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption, on the third day he arose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered, with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.

5. The Lord Jesus by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of God, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.

6. Although the work of redemption was not actually by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy and benefits thereof communicated to the elect in all ages successively from the be beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types and sacrifices wherein he was revealed and signified to be the seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpents head, and the lamb slain from the beginning of the world, being yesterday and to day the same, and for ever.

7. Christ in the work of mediation acteth according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to it self ; yet by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature, is sometimes in scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

8. To all thoſe for whom Chriſt hath purchaſed redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the ſame, making interceſſion for them, and revealing unto them in & by the word myſteries of ſalvaon, effectually perſwading them by his Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by his word and Spirit, overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power & wiſdom, in ſuch manner and ways as are moſt conſonant to his wonderful and unſearchable diſpenſation.

CHAP. IX.

Of Free-Will.

GOD hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty & power of acting upon choice, that it is neither forced, nor by any abſolute neceſſity of nature determined to do good or evil.

2. Man in his ſtate of innocency had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well pleaſing to God; but yet mutably, ſo that he might fall from it.

3. Man by his fall into a ſtate of ſin, hath wholly loſt all ability of will to any ſpiritual good accompanying ſalvation, ſo as a natural man being altogether averſe from that good, and dead in ſin, is not able by his own ſtrength to convert himſelf, or to prepare himſelf thereunto.

4. When God converts a ſinner, and tranſlates him into a ſtate of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under ſin, and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is ſpiritually good; yet ſo, as that by reaſon of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but doth alſo will that which is evil.

5. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the ſtate of glory only.

CHAP. X.

Of Effectual Calling.

ALL thoſe whom God hath predeſtinated unto life, and thoſe only, he is pleaſed in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call by his word and ſpirit, out of that ſtate of ſin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, enlightening their minds ſpiritually and ſavingly to underſtand the things of God, taking away their heart of ſtone, and giving unto them an heart of fleſh, renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jeſus Chriſt: Yet ſo, as they come moſt freely, being made willing by his grace.

2. This effectual call is of God's free and ſpecial grace alone, not from any thing at all foreſeen in man, who is altogether paſſive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to anſwer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

3. Elect infants dying in infancy, are regenerated and ſaved by Chriſt, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaſeth: So alſo are all other elect perſons who are uncapable of being outwardly called by the miniſtry of the word.

4. Others not elected, although they may be called by the miniſtry of the word, and may have ſome common operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither do nor can come unto Chriſt, and therefore cannot be ſaved; much leſs can men not profeſſing the chriſtian religion, be ſaved in any other way whatſoever, be they never ſo diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profeſs: And to aſſert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be deteſted.

CHAP. XI.

Of Juſtification.

THOSE whom God effectually calleth, he alſo freely juſtifieth, not by infuſing righteouſneſs into them, but by pardoning their ſins, and by accounting and accepting their perſons as righteous, not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Chriſt's ſake alone; nor by imputing faith itſelf, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteouſneſs, but by imputing Chriſt's active obedience unto the whole law, and paſſive obedience in his ſufferings and death, for their whole and ſole righteouſneſs, they receiving and reſting on him and his righteouſneſs by faith; which faith they have not of themſelves, it is the gift of God.

2. Faith thus receiving and reſting on Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, is the alone inſtrument of juſtification; yet it is not alone in the perſon juſtified, but is ever accompanied with all other ſaving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

3. Chriſt by his obedience and death did fully diſcharge the debt of all thoſe that are juſtified, and did by the ſacrifice of himſelf, in the blood of his croſs, undergoing in their ſtead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real and full ſatisfaction to God's juſtice in their behalf: Yet inaſmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and ſatisfaction accepted in their ſtead, and both freely, not for any thing in them, their juſtification is only of free grace, that both the exact juſtice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the juſtification of ſinners.

4. God did from all eternity decree to juſtify all the elect, and Chriſt did in the fullneſs of time die for their ſins and riſe again for their juſtification: Nevertheleſs, they are not juſtified perſonally, until the holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Chriſt unto them.

5. God doth continue to forgive the ſins of thoſe that are juſtified; and although they can never fall from the ſtate of juſtification, yet they may by their ſins fall under God's fatherly diſpleaſure: And in that condition they

have not usually the light of his countenance restord unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

6. The justification of believers under the old testament was in all these respects one and the same with the justification of believers under the new testament.

CHAP. XII.

Of Adoption.

ALL those that are justified, God vouchsafeth in and for his only Son JesusChrist to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry abba father, are pitied, protected, provided for and chastned by him as by a father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

CHAP. XIII.

Of Sanctification.

THEY that are effectually called and regenerated, being united to Christ, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also further sanctified really and personally through the same virtue, by his word and spirit dwelling in them, the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakned & mortified, and they more and more quickned, and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

2. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life, there abide still some remnants of

corruption in every part, whence ariſeth a continual and irreconcileable war, the fleſh luſting againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh.

3. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet through the continual ſupply of ſtrength from the ſanctifing ſpirit of Chriſt, the regenerate part doth overcome, and ſo the ſaints grow in grace, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.

CHAP. XIV.

Of ſaving Faith.

THE grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the ſaving of their ſouls, is the work of the Spirit of Chriſt in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the miniſtry of the word; by which alſo, and by the adminiſtration of the ſeals, prayer, and other means, it is increaſed and ſtrengthened.

2. By this faith a chriſtian believeth to be true whatſoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himſelf ſpeaking therein, and acteth differently upon that which each particular paſſage thereof containeth, yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatnings, and embracing the promiſes of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of ſaving faith are accepting, receiving, and reſting upon Chriſt alone, for juſtification, ſanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

3. This faith, although it be different in degrees, and may be weak or ſtrong, yet it is in the leaſt degree of it different in the kind or nature of it (as is all other ſaving grace) from the faith and common grace of temporary believers; and therefore, though it may be many times aſſailed and weakned, yet it gets the victory, growing up in many to the attainment of a full aſſurance through Chriſt, who is both the author and finiſher of our faith.

CHAP. XV.

Of Repentance unto Life and Salvation.

SUCH of the elect as are converted at riper years, having sometime lived in the state of nature, and therein served divers lusts and pleasures, God in their effectual calling giveth them repentance unto life.

2. Whereas there is none that doth good, and sinneth not, and the best of men may through the power and deceitfulness of their corruptions dwelling in them, with the prevalency of temptation, fall into great sins and provocations; God hath in the covenant of grace mercifully provided that believers so sinning and falling, be renewed through repentance unto salvation.

3. This saving repentance is an evangelical grace, whereby a person being by the holy Ghost made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth by faith in Christ humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrency, praying for pardon and strength of grace, with a purpose and endeavor by supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things.

4. As repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives, upon the account of the body of death, and the motions thereof; so it is every man's duty to repent of his particular known sins, particularly.

5. Such is the provision which God hath made thro' Christ in the covenant of grace, for the preservation of believers unto salvation, that although there is no sin so small, but it deserves damnation, yet there is no sin so great, that it shall bring damnation on them who truly repent; which makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary.

CHAP. XVI.

Of good Works.

GOOD works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy word, and not such as without the warrant thereof are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intentions.

2. These good works done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and living faith, and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end eternal life.

3. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ: And that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do, of his good pleasure; yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

4. They who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much, which in duty they are bound to do.

5. We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin, or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them, and the glory to come; and the infinite distance that is between us, and God, whom by them we can neither profit, nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants: And because as they are good, they proceed from his Spirit, and as they are wrought by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgement.

6. Yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him, not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unreproveable in God's sight, but that he looking upon them in his Son is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

7. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner, according to the word, nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God; and yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to God.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Perseverance of the Saints.

THEY whom God hath accepted in his beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, and union with him, the oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace, from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

3. And though they may through the temptation of Satan, and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves; yet they are and shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation.

ALTHOUGH temporary believers, and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God, and state of salvation, which hope of theirs shall perish, yet such as truly believe on the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.

2. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable perswasion, grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith, founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ, revealed in the gospel, and also upon the inward evidence of those graces, unto which promises are made, and on the immediate witness of the Spirit, testifying our adoption, and as a fruit thereof, leaving the heart more humble and holy.

3. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means attain thereunto: And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and chearfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished and intermitted, as by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience, and grieveth the spirit, by some sudden or vehement temptation, by

God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness, and to have no light, yet are they neither utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which in the mean time they are supported from utter despair.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the Law of God.

GOD gave to *Adam* a law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact and perpetual obedience, promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

2. This law so written in the heart, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall of man, and was delivered by God on mount *Sinai* in ten commandments, and written in two tables, the first four commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man.

3. Beside this law commonly called moral, God was pleased to give the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings and benefits, and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties: All which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only law-giver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end, abrogated and taken away.

4. To them also he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any now by virtue of that institution, their general equity only being still of moral use.

5. The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that

not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but alſo in reſpect of the authority of God the creator, who gave it: Neither doth Chriſt in the goſpel any way diſſolve, but much ſtrengthen this obligation.

6. Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby juſtified or condemned, yet it is of great uſe to them as well as to others, in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God, and their duty, and directs and binds them to walk accordingly, diſcovering alſo the ſinful pollutions of their nature, hearts and lives, ſo as examining themſelves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred againſt ſin, together with a clearer ſight of the need they have of Chriſt, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewiſe of uſe to the regenerate, to reſtrain their corruptions, in that it forbids ſin, and the threatnings of it ſerve to ſhew what even their ſins deſerve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curſe thereof threatened in the law. The promiſes of it in like manner ſhew them God's approbation of obedience, and what bleſſings they may expect upon the performance thereof, altho' not as due to them by the law, as a covenant of works; ſo as a mans doing good, and refraining from evil, becauſe the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace.

7. Neither are the fore-mentioned uſes of the law contrary to the grace of the goſpel, but do ſweetly comply with it, the Spirit of Chriſt ſubduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and chearfully which the will of God revealed in the law required to be done.

CHAP. XX.

Of the Goſpel, and of the extent of the Grace thereof.

THE covenant of works being broken by ſin, and made unprofitable unto life, God was pleaſed to give unto the elect the promiſe of Chriſt, the ſeed of the woman, as the means of calling them, and begetting in them faith and repentance: In this promiſe, the goſpel, as to the ſubſtance of it, was revealed, and was therein effectual for the converſion and ſalvation of ſinners.

2. This promise of Christ, and salvation by him, is revealed only in and by the word of God; neither do the works of creation or providence, with the light of nature, make discovery of Christ, or of grace by him, so much as in a general or obscure way; much less that men destitute of the revelation of him by the promise or gospel, should be enabled thereby to attain saving faith or repentance.

3. The revelation of the gospel unto sinners made in divers times, and by sundry parts, with the addition of promises and precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the nations and persons to whom it is granted, is meerly of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, not being annexed by virtue of any promise to the due improvement of men's natural abilities, by virtue of common light received without it, which none ever did make, or can so do: And therefore in all ages the preaching of the gospel hath been granted unto persons and nations, as to the extent or straitning of it, in great variety, according to the counsel of the will of God.

4. Although the gospel be the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and is, as such, abundantly sufficient thereunto; yet that men who are dead in trespasses, may be born again, quickened or regenerated, there is moreover necessary an effectual, irresistible work of the holy Ghost upon the whole soul, for the producing in them a new spiritual life, without which no other means are sufficient for their conversion unto God.

CHAP. XXI.

Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience.

THE liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel, consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the rigor and curse of the law, and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the fear and sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation, as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto him, not out of slavish fear, but

a child-like love and willing mind: All which were common also to believers under the law, for the substance of them, but under the new testament, the liberty of christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, the whole legal administration of the covenant of grace to which the Jewish church was subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

2. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or not contained in it; so that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience, and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

3. They who upon pretence of christian liberty do practise any sin, or cherish any lust, as they do thereby pervert the main design of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction, so they wholly destroy the end of christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

CHAP. XXII.

Of Religious Worship, and of the Sabbath-Day.

THE light of nature sheweth that there is a God, who hath a lordship and sovereignty over all, is just, good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart, and all the soul, and with all the might; But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy scripture.

2. Religious worſhip is to God the Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt, and to him alone; not to angels, ſaints, or any other creatures; and ſince the fall, not without a mediator, nor in the mediation of any other but of Chriſt alone.

3. Prayer with thankſgiving, being one ſpecial part of natural worſhip, is by God required of all men; but that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of his Spirit, according to his will, with underſtanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, & perſeverence: And when with others in a known tongue.

4. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all ſorts of men living, or that ſhall live hereafter, but not for the dead, nor for thoſe of whom it may be known that they have ſinned the ſin unto death.

5. The reading of the ſcriptures, preaching & hearing of the word of God, ſinging of pſalms, as alſo the adminſtration of baptiſm and the Lords ſupper, are all parts of religious worſhip of God, to be performed in obedience unto God, with underſtanding, faith, reverence and godly fear. Solemn humilations with faſtings, and thankſgiving upon ſpecial occaſions, are in their ſeveral times and ſeaſons to be uſed in an holy and religious manner.

6. Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worſhip, is now under the goſpel either tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is preformed, or towards which it is directed: But God is to be worſhipped every where in ſpirit and in truth, as in private families daily, and in ſecret each one by himſelf, ſo more ſolemnly in the public aſſemblies, which are not careleſly nor willfully to be neglected, or forſaken, when God by word or providence calleth thereunto.

7. As it is of the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time by Gods appointment be ſet apart for the worſhip of God; ſo by his word in a poſitive, moral and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in ſeven for a ſabbath to be kept holy unto him, which from the beginning of the world to the reſurrection of Chriſt, was the laſt day of the week, and from the reſurrection of Chriſt, was changed into the firſt day of the week, which in ſcripture is called the Lord's day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the chriſtian ſabbath, the obſervation of the laſt day of the week being aboliſhed.

8. This ſabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs beforehand, do not only obſerve an holy reſt all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldy employments and recreations, but alſo are taken up the whole time in the publick and private exerciſes of his worſhip, and in the duties of neceſſity and mercy.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of Lawful Oaths and Vows.

A Lawful oath is a part of religious worſhip, wherein the perſon ſwearing in truth, righteouſneſs and judgment, ſolemnly calleth God to witneſs what he aſſerteth or promiſeth, and to judge him according to the truth and falſhood of what he ſweareth.

2. The name of God only is that by which men ought to ſwear, and therein it is to be uſed with all holy fear and reverence: Therefore to ſwear vainly or raſhly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to ſwear at all by any other thing, is ſinful, and to be abhorred: Yet as in matters of weight and moment an oath is warranted by the word of God, under the new teſtament, as well as under the old; ſo a lawful oath, being impoſed by lawful authority in ſuch matters, ought to be taken.

3. Whoſoever taketh an oath warranted by the word of God, ought duly to conſider the weightineſs of ſo ſolemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully perſwaded is the truth: Neither may any man bind himſelf by oath to any thing, but what is good & juſt, and what he believeth ſo to be, and what he is able and reſolved to perform. Yet it is a ſin to refuſe an oath touching any thing that is good and juſt, being lawfully impoſed by authority.

4. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common ſenſe of the words, without equivocation, or mental reſervation: It cannot oblige to ſin, but in any thing not ſinful being taken, it binds to performance, although to a mans own hurt; nor is it to be violated, although made to Hereticks or Infidels.

5. A vow, which is not to be made to any creature, but God alone, is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to performed with the like faithfulness.

6. Popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no christian may intangle himself.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the Civil Magistrate.

GOD the supream Lord and king of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him, over the people for his own glory & the public good; and to this end hath armed them with the power of his sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that do good, and for the punishment of evil doers.

2. It is lawful for christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: In the management whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice and peace, according to the wholsome laws of each commonwealth, so for that end they may lawfully now under the new testament wage war upon just and necessary occasions.

3. They who upon pretence of christian liberty shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercises of it, resist the ordinance of God, and for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of christianity, whether concerning faith, worship or conversation, or to the power of godliness, or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church, they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate; yet in such differences about the doctrines of the gospel, or ways of the worship of God,

as may befal men exercising a good conscience, manifesting it in their conversation, and holding the foundation, and duly observing the rules of peace and order, there is no warrant for the magistrate to abrige them of their liberty.

4. It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion doth not make void the magistrates just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him: From which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted, much less hath the Pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people, and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be hereticks, or upon any orher pretence whatsoever.

CHAP. XXV.

Of Marriage.

MARRIAGE is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time.

2. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed, and for preventing of uncleanness.

3. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent. Yet it is the duty of christians to marry in the Lord, and therefore such as profess the true reformed religion, should not marry with infidels, papists, or other idolaters: Neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked by marrying such as are wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresey.

4. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the word, nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the Church.

THE catholick or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head thereof, and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

2. The whole body of men throughout the world, professing the faith of the gospel, and obedience unto God by Christ according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any errors everting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation, they and their children with them are, & may be called the visible catholick church of Christ, although as such it is not intrusted with any officers to rule or govern over the whole body.

3. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error, and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan; nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a visible kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name.

4. There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that anti-christ, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God, whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

5. As the Lord in his care and love towards his church hath in his infinite wise providence, exercised it with great variety in all ages for the good of them that love him, and his own glory; so according to his promise, we expect that in the latter days, anti-christ being destroyed, the *Jews* called, and the adversaries of the kingdom of his dear Son broken, the churches of Christ being enlarged and edified, through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, all enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable and glorious condition than they have enjoyed.

CHAP. XXVII.

Of the Communion of Saints.

ALL saints that are united to Jesus Christ their head by his Spirit and faith, although they are not made thereby one person with him, have fellowship in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection and glory: And being united to one another in love, they have communion in each others gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

2. All saints are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification, as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities: which communion, though especially to be exercised by them in the relations wherein they stand, whether in families or in churches, yet as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of the Sacraments.

SACRAMENTS are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by Christ, to represent him and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him, and solemnly to engage us to the service of God in Christ, according to his word.

2. There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

3. The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them, neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it; but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

4. There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ

our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, baptism and the Lord's supper; neither of which may be dispensed by any but a minister of the word lawfully called.

5. The sacraments of the old testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were for substance the same with those of the new.

CHAP. XXIX.

Of Baptism.

BAPTISM is a sacrament of the new testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life; which ordinance is by Christ's own appointment to be continued in his church, until the end of the world.

2. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel lawfully called thereunto.

3. Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary, but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.

4. Not only those that do actually profess faith in & obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptised, and those only.

5. Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed to it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it; or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.

6. The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered, yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will in his appointed time.

7. Baptism is but once to be administered to any person.

CHAP. XXX.

Of the Lord's Supper.

OUR Lord Jesus in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord's supper, to be observed in his churches to the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and shewing forth of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing of all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other.

2. In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin of the quick or dead, but only a memorial of that one offering up of himself upon the cross once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same; so that the popish sacrifice of the mass (as they call it) is most abominable injurious to Christ's own only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

3. The Lord Jesus hath in this ordinance appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use, and to take and brake the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants, but to none who are not then present in the congregation.

4. Private masses, or receiving the sacrament by a priest, or any other alone, as likewise the denial of the cup to the people, worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.

5. The outward elements in this sacrament duly set apart for the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit in substance and nature they still remain truly and only bread and wine as they were before.

6. That doctrine which maintains a change of the ſubſtance of bread and wine, into the ſubſtance of Chriſt's body and blood (commonly called tranſubſtantiation) by conſecration of a prieſt, or any other way, is repugnant not to the ſcripture alone, but even to common ſenſe and reaſon, overthroweth the nature of the ſacrament, and hath been, and is the cauſe of manifold ſuperſtitions, yea, of groſs idolatries.

7. Worthy receivers outwardly partaking of the viſible elements in this ſacrament, do then alſo inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but ſpiritully, receive and feed upon Chriſt crucified, and all benefits of his death; the body & blood of Chriſt being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine, yet as really, but ſpiritually preſent to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themſelves are to their outward ſenſes.

8. All ignorant and ungodly perſons as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Chriſt, ſo are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot without great ſin againſt him, whilſt they remain ſuch, partake of theſe holy myſteries, or be admitted thereunto; yea, whoſoever ſhall receive unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgment to themſelves.

CHAP. XXXI.

Of the State of Man after Death, and of the Reſurrection of the Dead.

THE bodies of men after death return to duſt, and ſee corruption, but their ſouls (which neither die nor ſleep) having an immortal ſubſtance immediately return to God, who gave them, the ſouls of the righteous being then made perfect in holineſs, are received into the higheſt heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies: And the ſouls of the wicked are caſt into hell, where they remain in torment, and utter darkneſs, reſerved to the judgment of the great day: Beſides theſe two places of ſouls ſeparated from their bodies, the ſcripture acknowledgeth none.

2. At the laſt day ſuch as are found alive ſhall not

die, but be changed, and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever.

3. The bodies of the unjust shall by the power of Christ be raised to dishonour; the bodies of the just by his Spirit unto honor, and be made conformable to his own glorious body.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of the last Judgment.

GOD hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by JESUS CHRIST, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father; in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

2. The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect, and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient: For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and glory, with everlasting reward in the presence of the LORD, but the wicked who know not GOD, and obey not the gospel of JESUS CHRIST, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of his power.

3. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity; so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the LORD will come, and may be ever prepared to say, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.* AMEN.

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